



## Memorandum

**TO:** Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Greenberg Traurig

**DATE:** August 6, 2012

**RE:** July Report to the Board of County Commissioners

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Below please find a summary of Greenberg Traurig's efforts on behalf of Miami-Dade County in July.

### *Overview of Legislative Activity in July*

Congressional leaders in both the House and Senate have reached an agreement that in September both chambers will vote on a continuing resolution to fund the federal government for the first six months of FY 2013, from October through the end March. The continuing resolution will use the \$1.047 trillion discretionary spending limit agreed to in the Budget Control Act of 2011. This agreement will allow members of Congress avoid the danger of a potential government shutdown before the November elections. Disagreements between House Republicans and Senate Democrats over funding levels for FY 2013 appropriations bills have prevented members of Congress from finalizing those spending bills. House Republicans have been crafting appropriations bills based on a \$1.028 trillion discretionary spending limit, while Senate Democrat have been working off of the \$1.047 trillion limit.

### *Aviation*

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee gave voice vote approval supporting Michael P. Huerta's nomination to head the Federal Aviation Administration. Huerta must now be approved by the full Senate. The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved a bill that would give the Transportation Secretary authority to prohibit airlines from participating in the European Union's emissions trading system. The EU's "cap and trade" style emissions trading system will include aviation, and would apply to all flights arriving or departing from EU airports, including U.S. airlines. GT continues to monitor aviation-related legislation and will keep Miami Dade County updated accordingly.

## ***Agriculture***

House Republican leaders removed a one-year farm bill extension from the House Rules Committee agenda after failing to gain enough support for it. The bill would also have provided disaster aid to ranchers and some farmers affected by drought, wildfires, and other natural disasters. House Republican leaders will instead work toward a stand-alone bill to authorize disaster assistance. The extension of current farm bill programs remains on hold in the House for the time being. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said the Senate would not consider a one-year extension of the farm bill, pressing the House to take up the five-year farm bill the Senate passed in June. GT continues to monitor action on the farm bill in the House and report to Miami Dade County as events warrant.

## ***Appropriations***

This month appropriations bills remained stalled in Congress due to disagreement between the two chambers over spending priorities.

The House's Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill will provide less money than Senate's for law enforcement grants. The House bill would provide \$51.1 billion in discretionary funding, a drop of \$1.6 billion from the current level. The Senate bill would provide \$51.9 billion.

The House Energy and Water appropriations bill would provide \$32.1 billion in discretionary funding, \$88 billion more than the current level. Democrats argue that this increase is being channeled to security programs and that the House bill cuts spending for energy needs. The Senate bill would provide \$33.4 billion.

The House and Senate appropriations bills for Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development largely agree on funding for key programs such as Community Development Block Grants. The House bill would provide \$51.6 billion in discretionary funds, while the Senate bill would provide \$53.4 billion.

GT will track these and other appropriations bills in both chambers and keep Miami Dade County apprised of their progress.

## ***Media Updates***

GT continues to send media updates on legislative and political issues to the County in order to ensure that the Commission and staff remain up-to-date on developments within the Beltway. Our team has continued to send those interested individuals information regarding issues such as the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill, appropriations and immigration, among others. We will continue to monitor the issues most relevant to the County and provide timely and accurate information in order to make certain that the County is aware of any developments which may provide an opportunity to accomplish established legislative goals.

If you have any questions, or we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.