

# STATE WEEKLY REPORT

March 24 – March 28, 2014

## STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

### Bills this Week / Analysis

Source: Jess McCarty (CAO)

**SB 612; HB 801; HB 1281 - Local preference preemption:** HB 801 by Rep. Heather Fitzenhagen (R – Fort Myers) would preempt local preference programs from applying to construction contracts that involve more than 20 percent state funding. HB 801 is currently pending in the House Local & Federal Affairs Committee chaired by Rep. Eddy Gonzalez (R – Hialeah).

Chairman Gonzalez held a meeting last night with interested parties on HB 801 and after hearing all sides, indicated that he would not hear HB 801 this session. He said that the Board's resolution played a big role in his decision. The Board passed No. R-283-14 on March 18, 2014, which opposed state legislation inc. HB 801, SB 612 and HB 1281 that would preempt Miami-Dade County's local preference ordinance related to county contracts.

Chairman Gonzalez's decision not to hear HB 801 in his committee means that HB 801 dies in his committee. Without a viable House bill, the Senate is unlikely to continue to advance the Senate companion bill, SB 612 by Senator Alan Hays (R – Umatilla). We may still see an effort to try to amend the language onto another bill.

There is also a third bill on local preference, HB 1281 by Rep. Erik Fresen (R – Miami), but HB 1281 has not received a committee hearing and has no Senate companion.

**SB 1464 – Environmental regulation – revision/update:** *SB 1464 was also amended to address the UDB supermajority preemption (1. below) by providing an exception for counties that have approved by a countywide election a charter provision requiring an affirmative vote of more than a simple majority. Here's a link to the strike-all amendment that incorporated our language addressing the supermajority provision (see starting bottom of page 2 at lines 39-42): <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1464975740.pdf>.*

The Senate Environmental Preservation & Conservation Committee heard SB 1464 by Senator Wilton Simpson (R – New Port Richey) re: environmental regulation yesterday afternoon. Among other provisions, SB 1464 would have the effect of:

1. Preempting the provision of the Miami-Dade Home Rule Charter that requires a two-thirds vote to amend the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) to include additional land outside the Urban Development Boundary (UDB); and
2. Prohibiting the County from enforcing wetlands and stormwater regulations following the reorganization of these code sections in 2004.

SB 1464 was amended in committee to remove the wetlands provision (2. above) and address the UDB supermajority provision (1. above). An amendment to the strike-all amendment removed the wetlands provision: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1464306452.pdf>.

The House companion bill is HB 703 by Rep. Jimmy Patronis (R – Panama City). Neither the UDB supermajority nor wetlands issues have been addressed in HB 703. HB 703 is on the agenda for the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee for Monday, March 31, **but there will be no amendments to HB 703 on Monday**. HB 703 has 2 committees remaining before it reaches the House floor (inc. Monday's committee).

The Board passed No. R-257-14 on March 4, 2014, which opposed HB 703 or similar legislation that would preempt the provision of the Charter requiring a two-thirds vote to amend the CDMP to include additional land outside the UDB, and that would preempt other local government environmental permitting regulations and authority.

attach

**SB 372– Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs):** Thursday, the Senate Appropriations Committee heard SB 372 by Senator Bill Galvano (R – Bradenton) re: Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs). As originally filed, SB 372 would have had the effect in Miami-Dade County of removing the DRI requirement for proposed large-scale developments outside the Urban Development Boundary.

SB 372 was amended today in committee to address this issue based on an amendment filed by Senator Gwen Margolis (D – Miami). Here's a link to the Margolis amendment that was adopted: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0372473730.pdf> and the underlying bill: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0372610204.pdf>.

The House companion bill to SB 372 is HB 241 by Rep. Matt Gaetz (R – Shalimar). HB 241 has three committee references, but has not yet received a committee hearing in the House.

The Board passed No. R-73-14 on January 22, 2014, which expressed concerns related to SB 372 because it would have had the effect in Miami-Dade County of removing the DRI requirement for proposed large scale developments outside the urban development boundary, and urged the Legislature to amend SB 372 to address this language.

**SB 1464 – Environmental regulation:** The Senate Environmental Preservation & Conservation Committee heard SB 1464 by Senator Wilton Simpson (R – New Port Richey) re: environmental regulation Wednesday. Among other provisions, SB 1464 would have the effect of:

3. Preempting the provision of the Miami-Dade Home Rule Charter that requires a two-thirds vote to amend the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) to include additional land outside the Urban Development Boundary (UDB); and

4. Prohibiting the County from enforcing wetlands and stormwater regulations following the reorganization of these code sections in 2004.

SB 1464 was amended in committee to remove the wetlands provision (2. above), but the UDB provision still remains in the bill (1. above). SB 1464 has 3 remaining committees before it reaches the Senate floor. Here's a link to the amendment removing the wetlands provision: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1464306452.pdf> and the underlying bill: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1464975740.pdf>.

The House companion bill is HB 703 by Rep. Jimmy Patronis (R – Panama City). Both the UDB and wetlands provisions (1. and 2. above) remain in HB 703. HB 703 is on the agenda for the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee for Monday, March 31. HB 703 has 2 committees remaining before it reaches the House floor (inc. Monday's committee).

The Board passed No. R-257-14 on March 4, 2014, which opposed HB 703 or similar legislation that would preempt the provision of the Charter requiring a two-thirds vote to amend the CDMP to include additional land outside the UDB, and that would preempt other local government environmental permitting regulations and authority.

**HB 709 – Special needs registry:** HB 709 re: Alzheimer's disease by Rep. Matt Hudson (R – Naples) includes a provision directing the state Division of Emergency Management to develop and maintain a special needs registry to be fully implemented by March 1, 2015. Currently, the special needs registry is maintained at the local level by County Emergency Management.

Here's a link to HB 709 in its current form:

<http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0709C1.pdf>. The House Health & Human Services Committee recommended HB 709 favorably on Thursday, and HB 709 next goes to the House floor.

The Senate companion bill, SB 872 by Senator Garrett Richter (R – Naples) has two remaining committees before it reaches the Senate floor.

We have opposed the special needs provision of HB 709/SB 872 based on Resolution No. R-149-14 passed by the Board on February 4, 2014, which opposed legislation that would remove the requirement the each local emergency management agency maintain a special needs registry and require a statewide registry.

**Affordable housing/SHIP distributions:** Attached is a county-by-county analysis of the Senate and House proposals for distributions of State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funds:

1. **Senate:** \$158.5 million for SHIP, with **\$13.8 million** to Miami-Dade County, which includes \$8.9 million for the County and the remaining \$4.9 million split among the eligible cities: Hialeah, Miami, Miami Beach, Miami Gardens and North Miami.
2. **House:** \$44.7 million for SHIP, with **\$2.9 million** to Miami-Dade County, which includes \$1.9 million for the County and the remaining \$1.0 million split among the 5 eligible cities.

The Board adopted Resolution No. R-952-13, which urged the Legislature to use the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing and not sweep such funds to the state general revenue fund. The Board also identified affordable housing funding as one its critical priorities for the 2014 session.

**HB 5601 – Utilities gross receipts tax:** The House Finance & Tax Subcommittee has introduced HB 5601 as a committee bill related to economic development. One of the proposals included in HB 5601 would redirect sales tax collections on sales of electricity to the gross receipts tax on utilities, thereby increasing revenues for Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)(schools construction). The current 7% sales tax rate on electricity purchased by businesses would be reduced to 4% and the gross receipts tax on electricity would be increased 3%.

There would be a negative fiscal impact to revenue sharing that Miami-Dade County receives from the state. The fiscal impact to Miami-Dade County is estimated at approximately \$1.7 million annually from this change.

Here's a link to HB 5601 (this language appears on section 3 starting at line 136 on page 6): <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/5601.pdf>.

**SB 102 – Aaron Cohen Act/Leaving the scene of an accident:** The full Senate passed SB 102 Wednesday by a 38-0 vote. SB 102 by Senator Miguel Diaz de la Portilla (R – Miami) is the Aaron Cohen Life Protection Act and imposes a 4-year mandatory minimum sentence and a 3-year minimum driver's license revocation for leaving the scene of a crash, including crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists and other vulnerable road users. Here's a link to SB 102 as passed by the full Senate today: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0102C2.pdf>

SB 102 will now go in messages to the House where the House companion bill, HB 183 by Rep. Bryan Nelson (R – Apopka), has passed 3 of its 4 committees of reference before reaching the House floor.

The Board adopted Resolution No. R-261-13 in April, 2013 urging the passage of legislation making it a second degree felony, with a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment, for a driver to leave the scene of a crash that resulted in injury of any person. In January, the Board identified passage of SB 102/HB 183 as a County priority.

**SB 144 – Red light cameras:** The Senate Transportation Committee heard SB 144 Wednesday. As originally filed, SB 144 by Senator Jeff Brandes (R – St. Petersburg) would have prohibited the use of red light cameras. A Proposed Committee Substitute was offered today that would have allowed cities and counties to keep red light cameras, but would have imposed some of the same restrictions on red light cameras that the House adopted in HB 7005 earlier in the week.

Several amendments that would have further restricted red light cameras were voted down. In the end, a motion to temporarily postpone SB 144 was approved by a vote of 6-3, which postponed consideration of SB 144 to next week in the Senate Transportation Committee. While the postponement doesn't kill SB 144, it appeared as though the postponement may have

been a courtesy to SB 144's sponsor who was also the chair of the committee. It didn't appear as though the votes were there today to get SB 144 out of committee.

Here's a link to the Proposed Committee Substitute to SB 144, which is the current form of the bill: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0144121990.pdf> and which remains temporarily postponed until next week.

**SB 218; SB 1630 – Chauffeured limousine preemption:** Two amendments re: preemption of chauffeured limousine regulation were withdrawn Wednesday in the Senate Transportation Committee to SB 218 re: Transportation by Senator Denise Grimsley (R - Sebring) and SB 1630 re: Dept of Agriculture & Consumer Services by Senator Bill Montford (D – Tallahassee). There was extensive debate among members and public testimony on the amendments before they were withdrawn. The amendments would have made it a prohibited unfair or deceptive regulatory act for a county, city or special district to restrict the public from freely bargaining for lawful livery transit services, excluding metered taxi services that accept street hails, by:

1. Establishing a minimum or maximum fare;
2. Imposing a minimum wait time between the reservation and delivery of the transit services; or
3. Creating classifications within each type of livery service, and to fix or approve zones, rates, or fares for such classifications, which apply differently to individuals and businesses that compete or attempt to compete with each other to provide similar services.

The amendments would have provided that they don't limit a county, city or special district from imposing reasonable restrictions concerning vehicle safety and driver qualifications.

Here are links to the amendments that were both withdrawn today in Senate Transportation Committee:

SB 218: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0218C2359862.pdf>

SB 1630: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1630C1897856.pdf>

**SB 1640 – Film incentives:** The Senate Governmental Oversight & Accountability Committee favorably recommended SB 1640 by Senator Nancy Detert (R – Venice) re: film incentives by a vote of 8-0. SB 1640 would extend the Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive Program for an additional 4 years and provide an additional \$50 million per year in available tax credits. SB 1640 has one committee remaining before it reaches the Senate floor. The House companion, however, HB 983 by Rep. Manny Diaz (R – Hialeah) has not received a committee hearing in the House. Funding for film incentives may become a budget conference issue.

We are supporting SB 1640, HB 983 and film incentive funding based on Resolution No. R-602-13, adopted by the Board on July 2, 2013. The Board also identified this issue as a critical priority in January.

**HB 5305 – Juvenile detention cost share:** The House Appropriations Committee favorably recommended HB 5305 re: juvenile detention cost share by a vote of 25-0. HB 5305 establishes a methodology for determining county and state responsibilities for juvenile

detention based on a 50-50 percent sharing of total juvenile detention costs. The costs will be based on actual expenditures for providing juvenile detention during the prior calendar year, and there would be no reconciliation process. HB 5305 also addresses disputed billings from fiscal year 2008-09 through fiscal year 2012-13 by providing an annual payment from the state to counties, with Miami-Dade's share estimated to be \$507,285 per year.

The Senate bill, SB 1532, includes the 50-50 state-county cost share prospectively, but doesn't include any amount for prior overpayments. SB 1532 was on the agenda Wednesday in a Senate committee and an amendment to SB 1532 to address prior overpayments similar to HB 5305 was not adopted.

Here are links to HB 5305: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/5305.pdf> and SB 1532: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1532.pdf>

HB 5305 next goes to the House floor as a budget conforming bill. SB 1532 is still referenced to two committees before it reaches the Senate floor. The Senate and House eventually will consider HB 5305 and SB 1532 as part of the budget conference process. Because of the prior overpayment piece, HB 5305 has a more favorable fiscal impact on Miami-Dade County than SB 1532. As such, we will eventually be advocating for the House position on the juvenile detention issue in conference.

**SJR 1256 – Miami-Dade Home Rule Charter:** The Senate Community Affairs Committee heard SJR 1256 by Senator Rene Garcia (R – Hialeah) Tuesday and recommended the bill favorably by a vote of 5-3. There were no members of the Miami-Dade Delegation on this committee. SJR 1256 next goes to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The House companion joint resolution, HJR 1081 by Rep. Frank Artiles (R – Miami) has not yet been heard in committee. SJR 1256 and HJR 1081 would propose a statewide vote on an amendment to the Florida Constitution to authorize amendments or revisions to the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter by a special law approved by the electors of the County. A bill proposing such Charter amendments would have to be approved at a meeting of the Miami-Dade County legislative delegation, filed by a member of the Miami-Dade Delegation and passed by the Legislature.

Here's a link to SJR 1256: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1256.pdf> and the staff analysis from today's committee: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/AS1256A1476.pdf>.

The Board adopted Resolution No. R-863-13 on October 22, 2013 opposing any bill or joint resolution that would adversely affect the Miami-Dade Home Rule Charter, and identified this issue as a County Priority in January.

**SB 584 – Medical Examiners:** The Senate Health Policy Committee temporarily postponed consideration of SB 584 Tuesday for the second week. SB 584 by Senator Tom Lee (R – Brandon) would preempt counties and medical examiners from charging a fee to perform a determination of cause of death in cases of cremation and burial at sea, while still requiring Medical Examiners to perform the analysis to determine the cause of death in such cases. Miami-Dade charges a fee of \$63 and the annual fiscal impact to Miami-Dade was estimated to be more than \$500,000 annually. The cost would have to be borne by property taxpayers if the fee could not be charged.

Here's a link to SB 584: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0584.pdf>. The House companion bill to SB 584 is HB 301 by Rep. Ross Spano (R – Riverview) and HB 301 was temporarily postponed in the House Local and Federal Affairs Committee on March 12 and has not re-appeared on the committee's agenda since.

**HB 353 – Miami-Dade Expressway Authority:** The House Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee Monday adopted a proposed committee substitute (PCS) to HB 353 by Rep. Jeanette Nunez (R – Miami) and then recommended the bill favorably on a vote of 11-3, with the following members of the Miami-Dade Delegation voting yes: Reps. Frank Artiles, Jeanette Nunez and Holly Raschein, and Rep. Barbara Watson voting no from our Delegation. The PCS removed the following provisions from HB 353:

1. A prohibition on MDX financing, designing or constructing public transportation facilities, transportation facilities owned or operated by the County, intermodal facilities, multimodal corridors, bicycle facilities or greenways that will improve transportation services within the county, or any programs or projects that will improve the levels of service on the expressway system.
2. A prohibition on MDX increasing tolls beyond adjustments for inflation, except for existing contractual and bond requirements;
3. A rescission of any MDX toll increase approved to take effect after January 1, 2014 that exceed an inflation adjustment;
4. A limitation on excess MDX toll revenues (after operation, maintenance and improvement of MDX expressways and discharge of bonded indebtedness) solely to use on state highways in Miami-Dade County;
5. A prohibition on MDX issuing any new bonds after January 1, 2014.

The following provisions still remain in the PCS to HB 353:

6. A requirement that the Board of County Commissioners to approve any MDX toll increase by a supermajority vote, consisting of a majority plus one vote;
7. A reduction in the size of the MDX governing board from 13 to 9 members;
8. A reduction from 7 to 4 the appointments to the MDX governing board by the Miami-Dade County Commission, and reduce from 5 to 4 the appointments by the Governor, shifting the balance of appointments away from the County Commission and to the Governor (the remaining member is the FDOT District 6 Secretary); and
9. A prohibition on a member of the MDX governing board from serving on the MPO or any other transportation-related board or commission.

Here's a link to the PCS that was adopted Monday: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0353010000.pdf>. Amendments were considered that would have removed the supermajority requirement for the BCC for toll increases (6. above) and that would have shifted the majority of MDX appointments back to the BCC (8. above), but both of these amendments were both considered unfriendly and voted down.

The Senate companion bill, SB 772 by Senator Rene Garcia (R – Hialeah) has not yet been scheduled for a committee hearing. We are opposing HB 353/SB 772 based on Resolution No. R-285-14 adopted by the Board adopted on March 18.

**HB 1389 – Chauffeured Limousines:** The House Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee also recommended favorably HB 1389 by Rep. James Grant (R – Tampa) on an 8-6 vote, with considerable discussion and public testimony. Reps. Artiles, Nunez and Raschein voted yes and Rep. Watson voted no from our Delegation.

HB 1389 would preempt counties from licensing or regulating chauffeured limousines, chauffeured limousine services and drivers of chauffeured limousines, and would impose uniform statewide regulation based on emerging transportation technology, such as Uber.

HB 1389 was not changed in committee, although the sponsor indicated that amendments are coming, here's a link to HB 1389 (still as filed):

<http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/1389.pdf> .

The Senate companion bill, SB 1618, by the Senator Jeff Brandes (R – St. Petersburg) has not yet been heard in committee. We are opposing HB 1389/SB 1618 based on Resolution No. R-863-13 adopted by the Board on October 22, which opposed any bill or joint resolution that preempted local Home Rule.

**HB 7005 – Red light cameras:** The House Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee heard HB 7005 Tuesday, which is a general Florida Department of Transportation package that includes red light camera language. As originally filed, HB 7005 (formerly PCB THSS 14-01) would have prohibited a city or county from installing new red light cameras at any location that didn't have a camera before July 1, 2014, and also would have reduced the penalty for a red light camera violation installed prior to July 1, 2014 from \$158 to \$83. An amendment was adopted this morning that removed all this prior red light camera language in HB 7005 and inserted the following provisions:

1. A prohibition on red light camera enforcement on right or left turn except when pedestrians or bicycles are present or a vehicle fails to yield to another vehicle;
2. Engineering countermeasures would need to be considered before a local government can install red light cameras and cameras could only be installed after such countermeasures have been implemented and have been shown to be ineffective at stopping red light running;
3. The cap on local hearing officer costs for red light camera appeals would be reduced from \$250 to \$100 (Miami-Dade's appeal cost is currently \$150);
4. 70 percent of funds a local government receives from red light camera violations would have to be used for traffic safety projects;
5. Photographic and electronic images or video from red light cameras would not be admissible as evidence in any other proceedings.

Here's a link to the red light camera amendment that the committee adopted today on HB 7005: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/7005039251.pdf>. With the amendment, HB 7005 was unanimously recommended by the committee.

## **NEWS /POLICY NOTES**

[House/Senate budgets](#)

Source: Florida Current

Budget figures for the initial House and Senate spending plans for the 2014-2015 fiscal year are not that far apart, especially compared to recent years, but the specter of election year politics hangs over the debate of how to spend upwards of \$75 billion.

House Democratic leaders took shots at their chamber's \$75.3 billion budget during a House Appropriations Committee meeting Monday, saying that with a \$1.2 billion projected surplus lawmakers should put more money into education, efforts to reduce waiting lists for critically needy disabled patients, environmental projects and affordable housing programs.

"Education is not at historic levels, its' not keeping pace with growth and frankly it's relying more on property tax. And that should be an issue," said Rep. Mark Pafford, D-West Palm Beach, in line to become Minority Leader after the mid-term elections.

The per student funding in preK-12 schools is \$6,988, about \$50 less than it was in 2006 but an increase of more than \$300 over the current year, a 3 percent hike. The total level of preK-12 school funding in the House budget is \$13.1 billion - more state funding than ever before but still less per pupil funding due to increases in student populations. Republicans defended the level of education spending even though the spending formula relies on a \$423 million increase in local property tax revenues.

"Mathematically, each one of the platitude arguments that you make against the education budget are just wrong," said Rep. Erik Fresen, R-Miami, chairman of the House Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

The Senate's \$74.9 billion budget - about \$400 million shy of the House plan - will be voted in committee Thursday and will likely be readied for a floor vote next week. The Senate spends similar amounts on education as the House, is close to the lower chamber on transportation spending (the Senate's \$8.7 billion for the transportation work plan is \$200 million less than the House) and both chambers are close to \$30.6 billion in health and human services funding.

There are, of course, key differences in specific areas. The Senate plan uses all \$226 million in the affordable housing trust fund for affordable housing programs, but the House sweeps \$137 million into general revenues for other projects, per Gov. Rick Scott's budget recommendation. The House also has \$47.7 million in agricultural water policy programs, about \$27.2 million more than the Senate.

The two chambers will iron out the differences in the coming weeks, but the main question hanging over the talks is how forcefully Democrats, especially in the House, will criticize the budget. Last year, with a much smaller budget surplus that still provided funding for state worker raises, a Democratic priority, all Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee voted against the budget. Just six – current Minority Leader Perry Thurston and Reps. Mia Jones, Cynthia Stafford, Reggie Fullwood, Janet Cruz and Pafford – voted against the budget Monday. Reps. Joe Gibbons, Alan Williams, Darryl Rouson and Hazelle Rogers vote in favor of it.

"We're Democrats, we don't have chairmanships to hold over people's heads to make them do things. We let our members express themselves, we're not that party that says you have to vote this way or that way. There's no caucus position on that," Thurston said.

This year, only select state workers in law enforcement will see raises – although they won't be based on performance, as recommended by Scott – but a large tax cut package of at least \$500 million is included, something Democrats will be hard-pressed to vote against.

Republicans are already pouncing on Democratic opposition to select budget items.

"To vote no on this budget means you're voting no for nearly \$90 million in cancer research, biomedical research, Alzheimer's research," Rep. Matt Hudson, R-Naples, told Democrats who pushed for more health care spending. "It's discouraging to think that someone is going to say no at the starting line, because there's a race to go yet."

### Beckham lobbies legislators

Source: LobbyTools

Retired soccer star David Beckham got a rock star welcome at the Capitol Tuesday as he visited legislators to talk up his plans for putting a soccer stadium at PortMiami.

He met privately with Gov. Rick Scott and some legislative leaders, seeking a \$2 million state sales-tax rebate – the same money football, baseball, basketball and hockey teams get – if he establishes his Major League Soccer team in Florida.

"We had a really good day, met with literally dozens of members of the House and Senate, a great meeting with the governor, the speaker and the leaders of the Senate," said lobbyist Brian Ballard, who represents Beckham. "We wanted to bring them his vision for Major League Soccer in Florida, and Miami."

Ballard said "he's a great ambassador for soccer, and he's going to be a great ambassador for Florida." He declined to say if he and Beckham, along with some MLS officials, made any progress but added, "I think the notion of soccer being treated like other major league sports has taken hold."

He said he is optimistic that bills by Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, and Rep. Jimmy Patronis, R-Panama City, will pass this session. The proposals would include pro soccer in the \$2 million sales tax rebate that other big league teams receive in Florida, Ballard said.

Beckham, shepherded around the Capitol by two lobbyists and some MLS officials, was greeted by enthusiastic clusters of staff aides, visitors and lawmakers. He patiently posed for pictures, shook hands and signed a few autographs before meeting privately with some senators.

Beckham recently announced plans to put a soccer team in Miami, with a 25,000-seat stadium at the county-owned port. Royal Caribbean, the world's second-largest cruise ship line, has some corporate facilities at the proposed stadium site, and company officials have warned that a soccer complex would interfere with port operations.

The state subsidizes stadium facilities in other parts of Florida, including pro team operations in Miami, and Beckham said at a news conference on Monday that "we want to be treated like every other franchise."

### Film and Entertainment industry

Source: Tampa Bay Times

Actors, producers and film crew members descended on Tallahassee on Wednesday to support the proposed expansion of the entertainment industry incentive program, which provides tax credits to film and television projects based in Florida.

Their collective lobbying helped persuade a Senate panel to approve a plan adding \$300 million in tax credits over the next six years — a first step toward the bill becoming law.

But the advocates had their eye on a much larger prize: a long-shot House proposal that would provide the entertainment industry with nearly four times as much support.

"Our existing incentive programs have kept us competitive with Georgia and Louisiana," Miami-Dade Film and Entertainment Commissioner Sandy Lighterman said. "We have things that they don't have. But we need the additional tax credits, because otherwise, we are off the map."

Florida has had an entertainment industry incentive program since 2003. But the program has already distributed its allocated \$296 million in tax credits.

As of November, 297 projects had received awards, including feature films like *Dolphin Tale* and *Spring Breakers* and television shows like *Burn Notice* and *Magic City*. Industry officials say the projects pumped nearly \$1.6 billion into Florida's economy and created more than 190,000 temporary jobs.

Expanding the program is a priority for the Miami-Dade legislative delegation.

Earlier this month, the Miami Omni Community Redevelopment Agency awarded EUE/Screen Gems Studios a contract to develop and operate the new Miami Entertainment Complex. Omni CRA chairman Marc Sarnoff said the move "(secured) Miami as one of the top destinations for film production in the Southeast."

But film industry advocates say it will take more than new facilities to lure Hollywood studios to the Sunshine State.

"We know they want to come here," said Rep. Manny Diaz Jr., R-Hialeah, who is sponsoring the measure in the House. "In order for us to be competitive, we need some sort of incentive."

Diaz said he already knew of *telenovelas* that were interested in filming in Doral and Hialeah. But he added that the measure was important for the entire state.

More than 200 members of Film Florida, a coalition representing the state's entertainment industry, traveled to Tallahassee this week to make that case. They argued that the proposal could have a \$4.1 billion impact on the state's economy.

Kelly Paige, president of Level Talent Group in Tampa, said the bill would benefit more than cast and crew members.

"It would help out the mom-and-pop restaurant owners and the dry cleaners," she said.

Paige said the measure would also stimulate tourism.

"People come to see the sets where *Burn Notice* was filmed, they come see Winter the Dolphin," she said. "We have a project that could do for Ybor City what *Miami Vice* did for Miami Beach."

Hillsborough County commissioners agreed earlier this month to spend up to \$300,000 to try to lure two projects to the Tampa Bay area. The bulk of the county money — \$250,000 — was earmarked for *The Infiltrator*, based on the true story of a U.S. Customs agent who spent years working undercover as a Tampa-based money launderer investigating Pablo Escobar's cocaine cartel and the banks that helped drug suppliers and smugglers hide money. Commissioners also earmarked \$50,000 for the makers of *Saat Hindustani*, a Bollywood movie about seven Indian college students studying abroad. Any county money would be paid post production — after the filmmakers provide documentation showing they reached economic goals, such as hiring a certain number of locals or spending a set amount of money on local vendors.

On Wednesday, the Senate proposal won unanimous support from the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee. But Chairman Jeremy Ring, D-Margate, pointed out that his committee handles policy issues, not the budget impact. And that will be a tougher sell.

Even if the Senate version (SB 1640) advances, the fate of the proposal is uncertain.

The version in the House (HB 983) has stalled, due partly to the large price tag.

Diaz conceded that the bill could be tough to pass the bill because Gov. Rick Scott is pushing \$500 million in tax cuts.

The House budget proposal currently does not include the \$200 million for additional entertainment industry tax credits. House Speaker Will Weatherford said the issue would likely be addressed during the budget conference process.

Another nagging concern: The nonpartisan watchdog group Integrity Florida recently raised questions about the transparency and efficiency of the film industry incentive program.

In a February report, Integrity Florida directors Ben Wilcox and Dan Krassner said the program should disclose more information about its deals and "increase fiscal responsibility" by offering incentives to the projects with the highest rate of return, not the projects that apply first.

### Miami-Dade Commissioner visits Capitol

This week Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman visited the Capitol and participated in the Florida Association of Counties Legislative day. Commissioner Heyman also met with various legislators to address County business and had the opportunity to testify before the Senate Transportation Committee regarding red light cameras.

### Employment figures

Source: LobbyTools

According to figures released by the Department of Economic Opportunity show Florida gained 33,400 jobs in February though the unemployment rate remained at 6.2 percent.

The total number of unemployed rose by 5,000 to 588,000, but the overall labor pool increased by 58,000 to 9.5 million – signs of a return of more workers to the labor force after a recent trend of a dwindling labor force participation rate.

Gov. Rick Scott heralded the numbers, but focused solely on the 32,100 private sector jobs added last month, ignoring the 1,300 public sector jobs added – most of which were state government jobs. Total public sector jobs are still down 1,000 positions over the last 12 months, however.

### **Press Release / Announcements**

Florida TaxWatch: Changing Class Size Limits Could Save \$10 Billion: [http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/67471\\_changing\\_class\\_size\\_limits\\_could\\_save\\_10\\_billion.pdf](http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/67471_changing_class_size_limits_could_save_10_billion.pdf)

Gov. Scott highlights early learning funding in Miami: [http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/67431\\_vernor\\_rick\\_scott\\_highlights\\_early\\_learning\\_funding\\_in\\_miami.pdf](http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/67431_vernor_rick_scott_highlights_early_learning_funding_in_miami.pdf)

Gov. Scott appoints Ivette Arango (Miami-Dade) to Architecture and Interior Design: [http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/67645\\_arango\\_o\\_doski\\_to\\_board\\_of\\_architecture\\_and\\_interior\\_design.pdf](http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/67645_arango_o_doski_to_board_of_architecture_and_interior_design.pdf)

## **Senate/House meeting schedule**

House schedule for March 1- April 4: <http://apps.lobbytools.com/cgi-bin/files.cfm?fid=19532>

Senate schedule for March 1- April 4: <http://apps.lobbytools.com/cgi-bin/files.cfm?fid=19530>

## **Fly-In Dates**

*Florida League of Cities (Legislative Action Days)*

April 1 –April 2, 2014

*Miami Dade County Days*

April 2-April 3, 2014