

TALLAHASSEE WEEKLY REPORT

October 17-21, 2011

Interim Committee Meetings

The legislature held another round of interim committee meetings this week, in preparation for the upcoming legislative session. Issues of importance to Miami-Dade County taken up this week are as follows:

- SB 148 by Sen. Bullard, Community Redevelopment passed the Senate Military Affairs, Space and Domestic Security Committee. The bill was supposed to then head to the Senate Budget Committee, its final committee, but the bill was subreferred to the Budget Subcommittee on Finance and Tax this week. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0148>. An identical House bill was filed this week by Rep. Bullard, HB 447. It can be found at <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0411>. (The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution sponsored by Commissioner Moss related to this issue.)
- SB 156 by Sen. Latvala, Assessment of Residential and Nonhomestead Real Property passed the Senate Community Affairs Committee, its first of three committees of reference. The bill now moves to the Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities Committee. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0156>
- SB 182 by Sen. Garcia, Miami-Dade County Lake Belt Mitigation Plan passed the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee, its second of three committees, this week. The bill, which has been co-sponsored by three other members of our local delegation, Senators Diaz de la Portilla, Braynon and Margolis, was supposed to head to the Senate Budget Committee, its final committee of reference, but was subreferred to the Budget Subcommittee on General Government Appropriations this week. An identical House companion bill, HB 377 by Rep. Nunez, was filed this week. House bill: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0377>. The Senate bill can be found by clicking <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0182>.
- HB 33 by Rep. Ahern, Traffic Control Signals passed the House Transportation and Highway Safety Subcommittee this week. The bill now moves on to the Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee. An identical Senate bill, SB 590 by Sen. Garcia, was filed this week. The House bill can be found at: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0033>. The Senate bill can be found at: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/590>.

Bills of Interest Filed This Week

Below, please find a list of bills filed this week of importance to Miami-Dade County. SB 590 and HB 377, which were filed this week, have already been mentioned above.

- **HB 379, Captive Insurance, Rep. Nunez** - Expands kinds of insurance for which captive insurer may seek licensure; limits risks captive insurers may insure; specifies requirements & conditions relating to captive insurer's authority to conduct business; requires before licensure certain captive insurers must file or submit to OIR specified information, documents, & statements; requires captive insurance company to file evidence with office relating to financial condition & quality of management & operations of company; authorizes foreign or alien captive insurance company to become domestic captive insurance company by complying with requirements; authorizes office to waive requirements for public hearings relating to redomestication of alien captive insurance company; revises capitalization requirements for captive insurance companies; requires capital of captive insurance companies to be held in certain forms; requires contributions to captive insurance companies that are stock insurer corporations to be in certain form; authorizes office to issue captive insurance company license conditioned upon certain evidence relating to possession of capital; authorizes revocation of conditional license; authorizes office to prescribe certain additional capital & net asset requirements; provides for annual captive reinsurance tax. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0379> An identical Senate bill, **SB 610** was filed by **Sen. Diaz de la Portilla** this week, as well. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/610> (The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution sponsored by Chairman Martinez related to this issue.)
- **HB 411, Municipal Water and Sewer Utilities, Rep. Watson** - Prohibits certain municipalities from imposing certain surcharges on consumers outside their boundaries for provision of water or sewer utility services. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0411>
- **SB 568, Noncriminal Traffic Infractions, Sen. Wise** - Providing for testing of certain unattended devices used to enforce traffic laws; providing that such devices used to enforce speed limit laws are also subject to specified provisions; providing civil fines for violations; amending s. 318.14, F.S.; specifying that, at a hearing of any charge of a noncriminal traffic infraction, the burden for proving guilt rests with the governmental entity bringing the charge; specifying that a person may not be compelled to be a witness against himself or herself in any hearing of a noncriminal traffic infraction; specifying that any person charged with a violation that involves a traffic infraction detector or any similar device has the right to confront any witnesses against him or her; requiring that evidence obtained from such device must be authenticated in court by certain persons who must appear in person and offer direct testimony and account in writing for any evidence used; providing for witness compensation pursuant to specified provisions; providing that a person receiving a notice of violation involving such device has the option of paying a fine or requesting a hearing without further issuance of a traffic citation and may not be charged a surcharge for requesting the hearing; providing that there shall be no prosecution of a traffic infraction based upon evidence from such device and a notice of violation or citation based on such device is void unless the device has passed specified accuracy test. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0568>

- **SB 588, Enterprise Zones, Sen. Garcia** - Creating the "Urban Job Creation Investment Act"; creating the Florida Urban Investment Job Creation Authority; creating a zone development corporation for each enterprise program zone; providing for the designation of enterprise program zones; authorizing the authority to periodically amend the boundary of an enterprise program zone; specifying the qualifications for businesses to receive state enterprise program zone incentives; authorizing certain tax credits, exemptions from unemployment contributions, and other state incentives for qualified businesses; authorizing certain tax credits against the sales tax and corporate income tax for qualified businesses located in enterprise program zones; exempting wages paid by qualified businesses to certain employees from unemployment contributions. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0588>
- **SB 640, Local Government Energy Zones, Sen. Bennett** - Authorizing a local government to create an energy zone by ordinance; allowing a producer of renewable energy to produce and sell energy within the boundaries of the energy zone; requiring that the producer or new customer of renewable energy be offered an interruptible rate from the utility; authorizing retail sales by any producer of renewable energy within an energy zone; requiring the Public Service Commission to adopt rules to govern sales by producers of renewable energy within the local government energy zone; redefining the term "public utility" to exempt producers and sellers of renewable energy from economic regulation by the Public Service Commission. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0640>

State Budget

Updated estimates presented at the Senate Budget Committee this week shows that the state's budget gap may reach nearly \$2 billion. Amy Baker, from the legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research, stated that although revenue may increase in the upcoming fiscal year, the economy will not grow quickly enough to maintain current policies under the latest projections.

The current projections can change for the better if consumer confidence recovers. They can change for the worse if troubles in the Euro-zone go unaddressed and wind up wreaking havoc on the credit markets, which would lead to another national downturn.

Senate Budget Chair JD Alexander expressed nervousness about the economic uncertainty, and will be looking to amass enough reserves to withstand the changing conditions. Another issue of concern to Chairman Alexander, as it relates to economic uncertainty, is that the legislature will be passing the state budget 2 months earlier than usual this year due to the earlier session.

Destination Gaming

As of the printing of this report, the destination gaming bills have not been filed in either chamber.

Commissioner Rebeca Sosa's Economic Development and Social Services (EDSS) Committee will hold a hearing on the issue on Wednesday October 26 at 9:30 am in the Miami-Dade County Commission Chamber. The hearing is described as "an initial dialogue between community chambers, businesses, stakeholders, and the members of the EDSS Committee in regards to possible anticipated casino development".

Senator Audrey Gibson

Audrey Gibson was sworn into the Florida Senate this week, a month after winning a special election. Senator Gibson, elected to Senate district 1, which encompasses portions of Northeast Florida, served in the Florida House from 2002-2010. The seat opened up after Senator Tony Hill resigned to accept a position in the administration of Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown.

Governor Scott Trade Mission

Governor Rick Scott departed late last night on a seven-day trade mission to Brazil, for the purpose of promoting the state to its biggest trading partner. This is the governor's third mission since taking office in January, as he visited Panama and Canada earlier this year.

The first stop on the trip will take the group to Rio de Janeiro, where it will visit a major trade show of Brazilian travel agents.