

WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT JULY 2 – JULY 6, 2012

Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Miami-Dade County Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:

THE SENATE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK

THE HOUSE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK

LAND CONVEYANCE LEGISLATION UPDATE

Legislation that Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen introduced, H.R. 2825, a land conveyance bill that would authorize USDA to convey land to Miami-Dade County to build MDR #74 was included in the House Agriculture Committee draft farm bill released on Thursday. The land conveyance, which has the support of the entire Miami-Dade County House delegation, along with the rest of the farm bill, will be marked up by the Committee on July 11, 2012 at 10:00 am.

The County has been trying to purchase a parcel of land from USDA for some time now in order to construct the Palmetto Bay Fire Station #74, that would have a response area including parts of Palmetto Bay and Pinecrest, and would help to cut down on response times to the areas of Cutler Bay and Coral Gables. Last Congress a bill was introduced in the House and Senate to try to get this land conveyance accomplished, however the measure stalled in the Senate due to Sen. DeMint's (SC) opposition to this type of legislation. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen reintroduced the bill last summer with the hopes of finally getting it passed in this Congress.

To ensure that this has the best chance of passing, Senator Nelson has actively supported the conveyance on the Senate side, giving us bicameral, bipartisan support. The Senate passed their farm bill last month, but did not include the conveyance. OIA will continue to work with the Congresswoman, the county's congressional delegation and the federal contract lobbyists to ensure the bill is included when the two chambers meet in conference and ultimately passed by Congress in this session.

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN SAYS THAT JOINT CASTRO-CHAVEZ OIL VENTURE POSES ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT

On Friday Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen issued the following statement regarding the plans by Venezuelan oil company, Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), to start drilling for oil off Cuba's coast.

"This joint Castro-Chavez venture poses an even greater environmental threat than previous drilling schemes because unaccountable dictatorships will be working side by side. We can be assured that the Chavez oil conglomerate will

not cooperate with responsible nations to verify its safety plans and drilling methods. These companies such as Russia's Gazprom, PDVSA and others only care about their profits and not about the abysmal human rights situation of the Cuban people at the hands of the dictatorship of the Castro brothers.

These conglomerates drilling for oil off Cuban waters pose a great threat to ecologically delicate marine ecosystems in the Florida Keys. These risks could have been prevented if the Obama administration would have used all of its diplomatic resources to stop Repsol from drilling, which led to the door being opened wide for other companies to follow in their misguided footsteps. My colleagues and I have had serious concerns regarding this dangerous scheme of the Castro tyranny and we object to any company drilling off the coast of Cuba. Any investments in Cuba's energy sector would bring much needed economic gains to a despotic regime that undermines and threatens U.S. interests and allies.

Just last week I authored broader legislation aimed at improving security in the Western Hemisphere to protect U.S. national security interests and bring much needed attention back to our Hemisphere. This legislation also contains provisions that would impose sanctions on corporations and persons that seek to enrich themselves and the moribund Castro economy while endangering our security and environment."

REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ INTRODUCES BIPARTISAN BILL TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Late last week, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) and Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz introduced legislation to protect children from sexual exploitation. The Child Protection Act of 2012 (H.R. 6063) increases penalties for the possession of child pornography, raises funding and resources for the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces and provides additional protections to child victims and witnesses.

The bill also improves the ability of the U.S. Marshals Service to apprehend fugitive sex offenders by giving them express administrative subpoena authority, however only for fugitive investigations of unregistered sex offenders. Representatives Smith and Wasserman Schultz were joined by 29 additional cosponsors in introducing the bill.

Rep. Wasserman Schultz said, "This legislation protects our most vulnerable constituents – our children. With the proliferation of the Internet and wireless technology, the spread of child pornography online must be addressed aggressively and quickly. This is a common-sense bill that provides the resources and tools our law enforcement officers need to apprehend child predators. I look forward to passing this bill in a timely, bipartisan manner, so that we can rescue the thousands of children suffering from unthinkable abuse."

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP) AUTHORIZATION INCLUDES RATE INCREASE

On June 27, 2012, the leaders of the Surface Transportation Authorization conference committee announced that after weeks of intense negotiations a deal had been reached on a 26-month reauthorization bill, which also included a five-year reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through September 30, 2017. The House passed the bill by a vote of 373 to 52 on June 29, 2012, and the Senate followed suit and approved the bill by a vote of 74 to 19. The bill was presented to the President and signed into law on Friday, July 6, 2012.

The conference committee ultimately chose to incorporate the five-year NFIP bill after Senate action on the NFIP bill stalled when Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) refused to allow a vote on the bill after Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) attempted to attach an abortion-related amendment. Of particular interest to the County, the final bill included language from the House-passed version of the bill which raises the annual limit on premium rate increases from 10 to 20 percent. Also of interest to the County was a provision that was initially included in the final bill that would have required the mandatory purchase of flood insurance by residents currently protected by levees, dams, and other flood control infrastructure. After the final conference report had been submitted to the House Rules Committee, objections by Senator Mark Pryor (D-AR) and several Gulf Coast Senators ultimately led to the bill's lead negotiators removing the mandatory purchase provision from the final bill.

The previously enacted NFIP extension provided a 60-day extension through July 31, 2012, and provided the Senate with enough time to finalize its five-year reauthorization bill (Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act of 2011—S. 1940), which had been approved by the Senate Banking Committee in September 2011. The House approved its own five-year reauthorization bill (Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011—H.R. 1309) last summer, and the bill's proponents had been pushing the Senate to move forward with a reauthorization bill. During Senate negotiations on moving forward with the 60-day extension, Majority Leader Reid agreed to bring the Senate's five-year reauthorization bill (S. 1940) to the floor prior to the July 4th holiday recess.

The bill's key stakeholders, including Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Chairman Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-AL) had been working on modifying the Committee-passed bill; however, the elimination of language in the Senate bill would require the mandatory purchase of flood insurance by residents currently protected by levees, dams, and other flood control infrastructure (Section 107). Senators Pryor and Thad Cochran (R-MS) led this effort in opposition to the new requirement. As noted above, this provision was ultimately not included in the final enacted five-year reauthorization bill. *(Compiled by the Alcalde & Fay Federal Lobbying Team)*

HUD'S MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Last Friday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the fiscal year (FY) 2013 HUD Appropriations Act. On the floor, representatives approved an amendment to add \$5 million to Continuum of Care (CoC) programs, resulting in a total of \$2.005 billion for HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants. The Senate Appropriations Committee previously approved a bill providing \$2.146 billion for the same programs, which should be sufficient to maintain the existing level of assistance for people experiencing homelessness – although it is lower than the \$2.231 billion requested by the Administration. The legislation has not yet passed the full Senate.

However, while the House increase represents a step in the right direction, it is still insufficient to renew all CoC grants and maintain the existing level of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) activity. As a result, even with this increase, about 25,000 people would be homeless instead of housed under this bill.

Over the coming months, the House and Senate will negotiate a final, compromise version of the legislation. When the House and Senate eventually meet to draft a final bill, additional funding for HUD's McKinney-Vento programs is essential and is a priority of the county. OIA and the federal contract lobbyist have been fully engaged on this item and the delegation is cognizant of importance to our local efforts.

OIA will advocate for the Senate version, but every indication is that this issue, like many others in Washington, won't be resolved until the lame duck session after the November elections.

FIRST LADY TO VISIT MIAMI

As part of her husband's re-election efforts, First Lady Michelle Obama will be on the campaign trail in Miami and Orlando next week for a series of events.

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN HONORED BY LOCAL NICARAGUAN-AMERICAN GROUP

On Friday, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen was at Yambo Restaurant to receive an award from a local Nicaraguan-American group, Committee for Poor Nicaraguans in Exile, for her efforts on behalf of the Nicaraguan community in South Florida.

Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado will also be present at this event to give the Congresswoman a proclamation from the City of Miami that showcases her civic involvement in the community.

Said Ros-Lehtinen, "I am blessed to represent a community that is made up of so many diverse cultures and ethnicities that have come together to form this beautiful mosaic that is the United States, the greatest democracy in the world. I am humbled that I have been given this awesome responsibility to help so many in South Florida. Thank you to all who have honored me with this humbling challenge to improve our community every day."

As a result of the significance of last week's decision by the Supreme Court regarding the Affordable Care Act, OIA thought that it would be useful to offer the following information again in the event you missed it or would like to review the details of the decision and its impact on Miami-Dade County again:

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS FEDERAL HEALTH CARE LAW

Last Thursday marked an historic day in U.S. Supreme Court history as the High Court announced its much-anticipated ruling on the legal challenges against the Affordable Care Act (ACA) brought by 26 states and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). The Court upheld the health care reform law's individual mandate in a 5-4 opinion authored by Chief Justice John Roberts, who was joined by Justices Elena Kagan, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Sonia Sotomayor.

The Court ruled that the individual mandate is a constitutional exercise of Congress' taxing authority, although the Court found the individual mandate exceeded Congress' authority to regulate commerce. Further, the Court held that Congress could not withdraw existing Medicaid funds from States for failure to comply with the ACA's expansion of Medicaid, but federal funding remains available to any State that affirms its willingness to participate.

The Court noted that Congress did not intend the payment to be treated as a "tax" for purposes of the Anti-Injunction Act and found that the Act did not bar its consideration of the suit. Under the law, the penalty for failing to obtain health insurance would be collected by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) through individual tax returns.

A copy of the decision and the Justices' opinions can be found here <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/11-393c3a2.pdf>. A comprehensive analysis of the decision's impact provided by the Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team is attached to this report. (Provided by Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team)

Potential Impact on Florida and Miami-Dade County

While a majority of justices upheld the vast majority of the law as Constitutional, they also ruled (7-2) that States may opt out of the ACA's expansion of Medicaid without losing all of their federal Medicaid funds. It is this part of the ruling that would likely have the most impact on the County. The Public Health Trust/Jackson Health Trust is the largest safety net provider in the State of Florida. The expansion of Medicaid was strongly supported by Jackson during the health care reform debate to ensure that more people would have access to coverage under Medicaid and help to reduce the amount of indigent care at Jackson.

Shortly after ACA was enacted, States filed suit challenging the expansion of the Medicaid program. Under the health reform law, States are required to expand Medicaid coverage to persons under age 65 with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level. While the federal government will initially pay for the expansion – they will cover 100 percent of the cost of expansion for the first three years, from 2014 to 2016, and no less than 90 percent after that. Beginning in 2017, States would be responsible for approximately 10 percent of the expansion costs. While the federal government would be paying most of the costs, this additional 10 percent could cost States billions in additional Medicaid costs.

Under the law, the federal government could have penalized States that did not participate in the expansion by taking away their existing Medicaid money. While the Court upheld the expansion of Medicaid, it was this penalty that a majority of the justices objected to in today's decision. In the 7-2 ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government could not coerce the States to expand their Medicaid rolls by taking away their existing Medicaid funding. Because of this ruling, States, including Florida, could decide not to participate in the part of the law that expands Medicaid coverage. (In the Court's decision, Chief Justice Roberts also made clear that the problem with the Medicaid provision could be "fully remedied" by prohibiting the Department of Health and Human Services from taking away Medicaid funding.)

There have already been news reports in Florida that indicate Gov. Rick Scott will likely not seek expansion of the Medicaid program, but the issue will likely be debated by the Florida legislature next year. Florida already covers pregnant women and infants above 133 percent of the federal poverty level, but the ACA would require Florida to cover more people in families with older children and some childless adults. There are currently about 3.2 million people on Medicaid in Florida, costing the State approximately \$20 billion per year. According to reports, the expansion is estimated to increase the state's Medicaid rolls by approximately one-third, or more than 1 million people during the first 10 years. While the estimates vary, the State has estimated that the increased cost would be \$5.7 billion over six years.

It's not clear what States will ultimately decide to do. It may be difficult for States to walk away from significant amount federal Medicaid funding. There are currently seven states and the District of Columbia already offering expanded Medicaid coverage. They are using their own state funds to pay for the expanded coverage until the federal government begins paying all of the costs in 2014. However, major budget concerns in Florida will likely lead to a debate in the Florida legislature next year. Whether the State of Florida opts in or out, will determine what the direct impact will be on Miami-Dade County. *(Provided by Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

LOOKING AHEAD

The week of July 9 – July 13:

The House will be in session next week.

The Senate will be in session next week.

The House and Senate are scheduled to be in session through August 3rd and then break for recess until September 10th.

If you would like to stop receiving this report please send an email to the following address - intergov@miamidade.gov - with "REMOVE" in the subject line.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT JULY 9 – JULY 13, 2012

Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Miami-Dade County Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:

THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK

THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK

(ATTACHED, PLEASE FIND THE FEDERAL CONTRACT LOBBYIST REPORTS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE)

USTR EVENT

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) contacted Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz, who serves on the USTR Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee on Trade, the Office of the Mayor, PortMiami and OIA this week to help coordinate an event to commemorate the signing of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia to coincide with Colombian Independence Day on Friday, July 20th. Ambassador Miriam Sapiro, Deputy USTR, will attend the event to be held at PortMiami.

Commissioner Diaz was appointed in March 2010 by Ambassador Ron Kirk to serve a four-year term on the committee.

COMMISSIONER HEYMAN AND OIA PARTICIPATE IN NACO CONFERENCE

This weekend, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman, joined by OIA, will travel to Pittsburgh to participate in the National Association of Counties’ (NACo) 77th Annual Conference and Exposition which provides an opportunity for all county leaders and staff to learn, network and guide the direction of the association. The Annual Conference, held each July, is hosted by a member county. The Annual Conference provides county officials with a great opportunity to vote on NACo’s policies related to federal legislation and regulation; elect officers; network with colleagues; learn about innovative county programs; find out about issues impacting counties across the country; and view products and services from participating companies and exhibitors.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY RECEIVES \$529,706 FOR EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG) PROGRAM

This week the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance announced awards for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. Miami-Dade County was the recipient of \$529,706 in funds. The program provides local governments with critical funding necessary to support a range of program areas including law enforcement, prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, planning, evaluation, technology improvement, and crime victim and witness initiatives. The program also puts an emphasis on violent crime and serious offenders.

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN ASKS STATE DEPT & MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HEALTH DEPT TO POST TRAVEL ADVISORIES WARNING OF CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN CUBA

On Tuesday Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, sent three letters to the State Department, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and the Miami-Dade County Health Department asking that these agencies post travel warnings on their respective websites in response to the Cholera outbreak in Cuba. Ros-Lehtinen is also requesting that OFAC notify all holders of Cuba travel licenses about the cholera outbreak in Cuba and the potential risk to travelers.

Statement by Ros-Lehtinen:

"Regardless of the attempts by the Castro regime to ignore the cholera outbreak, there is no denying that cholera is spreading throughout Cuba. This is a serious health problem for Cubans, but also for the U.S. because of the heavy stream of travelers between both nations. The Cuban regime, unlike other countries with cholera cases, is secretive, deceitful and uncooperative with international health officials.

"The State Department has a responsibility to warn U.S. travelers about the danger to nations with an outbreak such as cholera and I expect them to do so.

"Cholera is able to spread throughout Cuba due to the Castro regime's utter failure in areas such as sanitation and a badly deteriorated infrastructure where broken and rusted water pipes are the norm.

"Lives have already been lost in Cuba because of the regime's policy of keeping these issues in the dark so as to not scare away tourists and their hard currencies. If this outbreak worsens, it will be another hardship brought upon the Cuban people by the backward policies of the Castro dictatorship."

EVERGLADES RESTORATION REPORT SHOWS PROGRESS

On Friday the Obama Administration's Council on Environmental Quality published a progress report about Everglades restoration projects. U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20) released the following statement:

“President Obama’s administration has been committed to Everglades restoration from day one, and we’ve already seen significant progress in many of the projects underway. Since 2008 we’ve seen a dramatic increase in federal resources as well as the commencement of several major federal projects – from construction on a Tamiami Trail bridge, to improving the ecosystem at Picayune Strand and the Indian River Lagoon. It is important that Congress maintain the momentum of the last few years by fully funding the Administration’s restoration priorities as laid out in the President’s 2013 budget.

“Part of restoring our River of Grass depends on our farmers and ranchers in Florida doing their part to help with conservation efforts. I’m glad the Administration has developed partnerships with ranchers and farmers so they can work together to improve water quality and protect the habitats near the Everglades, while at the same time supporting Florida’s \$100 billion agricultural economy.

“Restoration of the Everglades has significant environmental and economic benefits for Florida. In addition to the seven million Floridians who rely on the Everglades for their primary source of drinking water, a study conducted for the Everglades Foundation showed that for every dollar invested in Everglades restoration, \$4 are generated in economic benefits. Restoration projects launched by the Administration already have generated 6,600 jobs and are expected to generate more. An \$11.5 billion investment in Everglades restoration would result in \$46.5 billion in gains to Florida’s economy and create more than 440,000 jobs over the next 50 years, by spurring construction and tourism activity.

“We are fortunate to have one of the world’s great wonders right here in South Florida, and restoring the Everglades serves as a reminder that we must leave this world better than we found it so that future generations can enjoy it too.”

HUD’S MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE GRANTS

On Tuesday, Congressman Alcee Hastings, co-chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Homelessness and the National Coalition for the Homeless co-chaired a caucus meeting to discuss the increase and severity of beatings inflicted on the homeless across the country. The hearing comes on the heels of the House of Representatives passing the fiscal year (FY) 2013 HUD Appropriations Act two weeks ago which included a floor amendment to add \$5 million to Continuum of Care (CoC) programs, resulting in a total of \$2.005 billion for HUD’s McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants. The Senate Appropriations Committee previously approved a bill providing \$2.146 billion for the same programs, which should be sufficient to maintain the existing level of assistance for people experiencing homelessness – although it is lower than the \$2.231 billion requested by the Administration. The legislation has not yet passed the full Senate.

However, while the House increase represents a step in the right direction, it is still insufficient to renew all CoC grants and maintain the existing level of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) activity. As a result, even with this increase, about 25,000 people would be homeless instead of housed under this bill. When the House and Senate eventually meet to draft a final bill, additional funding for HUD's McKinney-Vento programs is essential and is a priority of the county.

OIA is working with the county's Homeless Trust and the Mayor's office to draft letter to congress asking for an increase in funding. OIA and the federal contract lobbyist have been fully engaged on this issue and will advocate for the Senate version, but every indication is that this issue, like many others in Washington, won't be resolved until the lame duck session after the November elections.

HOUSE VOTES ON REPEALING HEALTH CARE REFORM

On Wednesday, the House passed a bill (H.R. 6079) to repeal the 2010 health care reform law. The vote was 244 to 185. Five Democrats voted in favor of the repeal – Dan Boren (OK), Larry Kissell (NC), Jim Matheson (UT), Mike McIntyre (NC), and Mike Ross (AR). Following the recent U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold the health care reform law, the House Republican leadership wanted to show their commitment to repealing the law and plan to keep pushing the issue going into the November elections.

The Democratic-controlled Senate is not expected to take up H.R. 6079, and the White House has issued a veto threat against the bill.

The House has voted 32 times to repeal or eliminate funding for the health care law since the Republicans took control of the House in January 2011, beginning with a similar repeal bill (H.R. 2) that passed by a vote of 245-189. However, H.R. 2 was never considered in the Senate. *(Compiled by the Akerman Senterfitt Federal Lobbying Team)*

TWO WASSERMAN SCHULTZ SPONSORED BILLS PASSED BY HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

On Tuesday, two of U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz's bills moved closer to becoming law when they were passed by the House Judiciary Committee today. The Stopping Tax Offenders and Prosecuting Identity Theft Act was introduced in April by U.S. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Judiciary Chairman Lamar Smith (TX-21). The bill is aimed at addressing the problem of tax return identity theft by strengthening criminal penalties and increasing the prosecution rate of tax return identity thieves.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, last year alone more than 850,000 tax returns and \$5.8 billion were associated with fraudulent tax refunds involving identity theft. This is of particular concern for Floridians because the state has the most identity theft complaints in the country.

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman introduced a resolution to be reviewed at the aforementioned NACo Conference that calls for the support of this legislation, which has a companion bill in the Senate sponsored by Sen. Bill Nelson.

The resolution, urges Congress to pass legislation supporting action to reduce tax crimes and identity theft; require the Secretary of the Treasury to take necessary action to correct a tax return or tax information affected by the misuse of a taxpayer's identity within 90 days after receiving notice of such misuse from the taxpayer or government identifying the fraud; increase efforts to prevent and deter such crimes. Increase coordination between all relevant agencies and levels of government.

The second bill that now heads to the House Floor is the Child Protection Act of 2012, which increases penalties for the possession of child pornography while also providing additional protections for child victims and witnesses. The Justice Department estimates that one-third of the world's pedophiles involved in organized pornography rings worldwide live in the U.S.

The bill is also co-sponsored by Chairman Lamar Smith, and is endorsed by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, National District Attorneys Association, National Sheriffs Association, Fraternal Order of Police, International Association of Chiefs of Police, PROTECT, The National Association to Protect Children, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), Men Can Stop Rape, RAINN, Surviving Parents Coalition, National White Collar Crime Center, Futures Without Violence, Jewish Women International, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, and the California Protective Parents Association.

REP. ROS-LEHTINEN SEEKS TO PROTECT U.S. INTERESTS, ALLIES IN WESTERN HEMISPHERE WITH NEW BILL

Last week, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, announced the introduction of the Western Hemisphere Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (H.R. 6067) she authored. The bill, introduced on Friday, provides a comprehensive approach to counter current and emerging threats to the United States and its allies in the Western Hemisphere. Among the original co-sponsors of this legislation are Reps. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), David Rivera (R-FL), Connie Mack (R-FL) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL).

"Drug cartels, narcotraffickers, money launderers, extremist groups, and regional tyrants have created a toxic brew which threatens security, stability, and democracy in Latin America and throughout the Western Hemisphere," Ros-

Lehtinen said. *“Without a comprehensive strategy to address this multi-faceted threat, U.S. security, our interests, and our allies will be further jeopardized.”*

“We are also continuing to see more and more activity and involvement in the Western Hemisphere from the likes of Iranian dictator Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and other tyrants, and like-minded extremist groups,” Ros-Lehtinen said. “This legislation makes it U.S. policy to deny Iran, its proxies such as Hezbollah, and other dangerous extremists any safe haven or financial support in the region, as well as to deter Latin American governments from cooperating with them,” she added.

“The United States cannot sit idly by as its enemies actively seek to harm our interests in the Western Hemisphere,” Ros-Lehtinen said. She continued: “This bill also seeks to prevent individuals and corporations from investing in Cuba’s oil drilling aspirations in order to prevent the Castro regime from having access to a new financial spigot to continue its nefarious activities.”

Ros-Lehtinen’s bill seeks to address the growing threat posed by Iran, its proxies, and other extremists in the region. It also urges the Department of State to establish a Western Hemisphere Regional Coordination Center with participating allied countries in the region to manage efforts, capacity, and intelligence information to efficiently fight drug traffickers and monitor extremist and other illicit activities. The bill also encourages the creation of an agreement to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons throughout the Western Hemisphere.

LAND CONVEYANCE LEGISLATION UPDATE

On Wednesday, July 11, the House Agriculture Farm Bill Committee held a markup of the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management (FARRM) Act (H.R. 6083) released on Thursday, July 5. After considering over 100 amendments, the Committee reported out the bill favorably by a vote of 35 to 11 during the early morning of July 12. Included in the bill is legislation introduced by Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen for a land conveyance that would authorize USDA to convey land to Miami-Dade County to build MDFR #74. The land conveyance has the support of the entire Miami-Dade County House delegation.

However, hurdles this remain because the House is split along party lines based differences in the cost of the bill and significant cuts to food stamps. Additionally, the

Senate version cuts less overall to the bill and only a fourth of the amount proposed in the House to the food stamp program.

The County has been trying to purchase a parcel of land from USDA for some time now in order to construct the Palmetto Bay Fire Station #74, that would have a response area including parts of Palmetto Bay and Pinecrest, and would help to cut down on response times to the areas of Cutler Bay and Coral Gables. Last Congress a bill was introduced in the House and Senate to try to get this land conveyance accomplished, however the measure stalled in the Senate due to Sen. DeMint's (SC) opposition to this type of legislation. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen reintroduced the bill last summer with the hopes of finally getting it passed in this Congress.

To ensure that this has the best chance of passing, Senator Nelson has actively supported the conveyance on the Senate side, giving us bicameral, bipartisan support. The Senate passed their farm bill last month, but did not include the conveyance. OIA will continue to work with the Congresswoman, the county's congressional delegation and the federal contract lobbyists to ensure the bill is included when the two chambers meet in conference and ultimately passed by Congress in this session.

FIRST LADY VISITS MIAMI

First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to Miami this week and spoke at the Barbara Goleman Senior High in Miami Lakes as part of a swing through Florida for the President's re-election campaign.

CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON ANNOUNCES \$10 MILLION IN FEDERAL GRANTS

This week Congresswoman Frederica Wilson announced more than \$10 million in federal grants. *"These grants will not only support cutting-edge research at our district's universities, bolster law enforcement programs and enable public transportation enhancements, they will help create or save hundreds of jobs,"* said Congresswoman Wilson.

The recipients and awards are listed below.

Miami Dade County

- FY 12 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Local Solicitation - \$529,706

Barry University

- Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships - \$60,244
- Nurse Faculty Loan Program - \$1,176,182

The University of Miami

- YscE/YscG chaperone-dependent secretion of Yersinia pestis YscF - \$191,250
- Miami Clinical and Translational Science Institute - \$3,644,887
- Leukadherins as novel compounds for treating restenosis - \$382,500
- Yellow Fever, rDNA (EP+IL-12) and rAd35 as Vectors for AIDS Vaccine Development - \$2,158,371
- Role of TRIF-dependent TLR signaling in intestinal immunity - \$350,624
- Apical Polarity Complex Signaling in Inflammation in Intestinal Epithelia - \$332,775
- Cytological studies of developing and mature neurons - \$409,015

Banyan Community Health Center

- Health Center Cluster - \$595,833

City of Opa-Locka

- FY 12 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Local Solicitation - \$27,443

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

- Bus and Bus Facilities - \$350,000

CLIMATE COMMUNITIES

On Thursday, during a webinar entitled, "Sustainable Transportation Funding Outlook - 2012 and Beyond" Climate Communities discussed the recently passed a \$54.6 billion surface transportation authorization (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or "MAP-21") that will shape how communities address transportation challenges for the next several years. According to Climate Communities, "The legislation reorganizes the types of transportation resources that will flow through the states for local sustainable transportation projects, and establishes new performance metrics that will determine how states will be allocated resources."

The U.S. House of Representatives also recently passed a transportation appropriations bill for FY 2013. That legislation, markedly different from the bill produced by the Senate Appropriations Committee, eliminates funding for popular sustainability grant programs, such as the Sustainable Communities and TIGER initiatives. The full Senate has yet to consider FY 2013 transportation appropriations.

LOOKING AHEAD

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