

Below is an informal overview of this week's activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs – Washington D.C. office.

THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK

THE HOUSE WAS IN RECESS ALL WEEK

ENTIRE FLORIDA DELEGATION BACKS MIAMI AIR SHOW PROPOSAL

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen led a very successful effort to secure a bi-partisan and bi-cameral letter of support, bolstering Miami-Dade County's efforts to secure federal approval to host the Miami International Aerospace Show (MIAS).

The letter, addressed to Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley, was signed by all 27 members of Florida's Congressional Delegation. The letter supports the efforts of the County and the Beacon Council to host the event, which would be held at the Homestead Air Reserve Base.

OIA, the Beacon Council, Gov. Scott's Washington DC Office and the congressional delegation, have worked closely together in showing collective support for the County's efforts.

3% WITHHOLDING BRIEFING

Department of Procurement Management Director Miriam Singer and OIA participated in a briefing coordinated by the office of Senator Scott Brown (MA) and a meeting with staff from Sen. Bill Nelson's office to advocate for the repeal of Section 511 of the Tax Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005. Final implementation of Sec. 511 requires federal, state and local governments to withhold 3 percent from all payments for goods and services purchased from small businesses.

Senators Brown and Olympia Snowe (ME) have filed S. 164 as amendment to S. 782, the Economic Development Revitalization Act of 2011. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Miami-Dade County and associations and municipalities from across the country have expressed strong support for this amendment. Additionally, there are three bills before Congress that seek to repeal the withholding requirement: H.R. 674 (148 co-sponsors), introduced by Rep. Wally Herger (CA); S. 89 introduced by Sen. David Vitter (LA); and S. 164, introduced by Senator Scott Brown (MA), which has 15 co-sponsors including Sen. Marco Rubio.

REP. MILLER & MEMBERS OF DADE DELEGATION VISIT MIAMI VA

House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller (FL-1) along with Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. David Rivera and Rep. Frederica Wilson visited the Miami Veterans Administration Hospital to discuss HIV and hepatitis infections. This is the second congressional tour of the hospital in response to the March 2009 announcement by the VA notifying 2,400 local veterans that the colonoscopies they had received might have been carried out using improperly sterilized equipment. In July 2010, an additional 79 veterans were notified of this oversight. This year, a

third notification was sent out to 12 more veterans. In total, there have been at least five veteran patients who contracted HIV, eight who contracted Hepatitis C, and one who contracted Hepatitis B at the Miami VA Hospital.

Members, including Rep. Wilson who “reiterated her request for the hospital to establish a clear follow-up process with all veterans who were potentially infected, including veterans who have decided to seek private care and treatment for their infections.” Rep. Ros-Lehtinen added, “As I have said on past occasions and as I will say to the personnel at the Miami VA: this is inexcusable and our veterans deserve and need better care and treatment than what they have been given since this terrible ordeal began two years ago.”

MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY

OIA continues to work with the Miami-Dade County Congressional delegation regarding funding discrepancies with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). At issue are provisions within the FY 2009 THUD Appropriations Act which required HUD to rescind \$750 million in unspent Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) funds from 2400 public housing authorities.

Earlier this year, MDPHA discovered that the \$43 million recaptured from MDPHA was the second largest recapture amount of the top ten programs experiencing recapture in the country. The amount was also disproportionate in relation to the size of the other PHA's respective HCV programs.

In May, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Chairman Joe Martinez sent a letter to HUD requesting corrective action and an explanation for the disproportionate recapture amount. HUD's response letter did not provide an explanation regarding the recapture amount, nor did it indicate the agency would take corrective action to address this inequitable treatment.

Director Gregg Fortner, OIA and the federal lobbying team will continue to seek an acceptable response and resolution from HUD.

PORT OF MIAMI DEEP DREDGE

OIA continues to work with the Florida Congressional Delegation, key members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Obama Administration, in preparation for the next phase of the Port of Miami's deep dredge project, which will require a construction advanced funds agreement to be cleared by Congress and the Administration. Seaport Director Bill Johnson will be visiting Washington D.C. next week to discuss the project's next phase with key Obama Administration and congressional officials, to ensure expedited consideration and approval of this important project.

OIA PARTICIPATES IN FEMA DISASTER ALERT CONFERENCE CALL

U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will conduct the first nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) later this year. To begin public outreach leading up to the test, FEMA and FCC carried out a Congressional Advisory and Conference Call to discuss their efforts to coordinate with state and local emergency management professionals, in addition to increasing public education and awareness of the test. On the call were congressional staff and federal state and local government officials (including OIA). The nationwide test will occur on Wednesday, November 9, at 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and may last up to three and a half minutes.

The EAS is a national alert and warning system established to enable the President of the United States to address the American public during emergencies. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service, governors, and state and local emergency authorities also use parts of the system to issue more localized emergency alerts.

DISASTER FUNDING

Last week, OIA covered an oversight hearing led by Sen. Mary Landrieu (LA), who is the chair of the Senate Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee. The purpose of the hearing was to analyze the status of emergency management in the United States, including the important role communications play during a disaster.

In the hearing, Chair Landrieu indicated strong skepticism to the level of FEMA disaster funding included in the recently passed FY12 House Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill and voiced concern that FEMA may require emergency supplemental funding due to the onslaught of natural disasters throughout the country.

The hearing included testimony from the following witnesses:

- Craig Fugate, administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Greg Schaffer, acting deputy undersecretary of Homeland Security, National Protection and Programs Directorate
- Mark Riley, chief of staff, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, state of Louisiana
- David W. Vice, executive director, Integrated Public Safety Commission, state of Indiana
- Eddie Hicks, director, Morgan County, Alabama, Emergency Management, and president, International Association of Emergency Managers-USA
- Ron Lane, director, Office of Emergency Services, San Diego County, Calif.

FUNDING FOR CUBA PROGRAMS

As reported in the Miami Herald and AFP over the past few months, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman John Kerry (MA) has used his authority as a Senator to place a "hold" on \$20 million in funding that the Obama Administration's U.S. Department of International Development

wants directed toward Cuban pro-democracy efforts. Last week, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff indicated that the Chairman would lift his hold if that amount was decreased to \$15 million. OIA will continue to monitor the issue as it evolves.

CLIMATE COMMUNITIES CALL

This week's Climate Communities Seminar discussed the fragmented policy framework between Authority-Having Jurisdictions (AHDs) and 5,000 utilities across the United States. The fragmentation between these two entities has created inefficiencies that have led to high utility costs and limited market penetration for innovative solutions for mitigating the rising cost of energy. The US Department of Energy has established a process that will phase in a strong solar energy market on a state-by-state basis. This process will take the form of a Solar Challenge, which will involve state and or local government Teams (awardees). As established by the DOE, Teams must represent 500,000+ individuals.

DOE will award grant amounts ranging between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000 to 25 Teams to fund solar energy renovation projects. Teams can constitute: State or territorial governments; local governments; consortia (regional or statewide teams of local government, large single jurisdictions, or Indian Tribes); non-profits or for profits acting on behalf of a consortia. Strong teams, able to create rooftop solar energy systems that generate more energy that required by their respective communities, will be able to sell units of un-used energy to utility companies. The pricing standard for these sales will be determined at the state level. To help implement best practices learned from the challenge, the Department of Energy is looking to employ financed ownership options for states, which include: direct financing, community solar programs, and/or utility-owned distribution. The DOE will utilize a point-scoring benchmark to evaluate the policy frameworks of the selected Teams. The benchmarking process will also allow Teams to demonstrate their progress and implementation success stories. Detailed instructions for the benchmarking process will be issued later this month to help interested applicants. Formal applications are due August 31, 2011. Applicants must include a letter of intent (due July 29, 2011), a project plan, and support letters from interested stakeholders, as part of their submission.

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

ANNOUNCED WILL RUN:

Herman Cain – former CEO of Godfather's Pizza
Newt Gingrich – former Speaker of the House
Gary Johnson – former Gov. of New Hampshire
Ron Paul – Texas Congressman
Tim Pawlenty – former Gov. of Minnesota
Mitt Romney – former Gov. of Massachusetts
Rick Santorum – former Sen. From Pennsylvania

YET TO ANNOUNCE:

Michele Bachmann – Minnesota Congresswoman
Jim DeMint – South Carolina Senator
Rudy Giuliani – former Mayor of New York City
Jon Huntsman – former Gov. of Utah & former Ambassador to China
Sarah Palin – former Gov. of Alaska
Buddy Roemer – former Gov. of Louisiana

SENATOR RUBIO’S MAIDEN SPEECH

On Tuesday, June 14th, Sen. Marco Rubio is scheduled to deliver his first Senate floor speech. Sen. Rubio will be the final member of the freshman class of senators to deliver his floor speech.

CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON BETS ON MIAMI HEAT

Rep. Frederica Wilson and Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas have made a friendly wager on the outcome of the NBA Finals between the Miami Heat and Dallas Mavericks. Rep. Wilson has wagered Joe’s Stone Crabs to Rep. Johnson’s authentic Texas barbeque. GO HEAT!

NEXT WEEK’S CALENDAR: JUNE 13 – JUNE 17

The House & Senate will be in session.

County officials will be taking part in Climate Communities’ Local Clean Energy Leadership Summit in Washington, DC, June 15-17, 2011.