

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT**

### **September 5th – September 9th, 2011**

**Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:**

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Congress reconvened after a nearly five week recess, therefore there is a lot of information included in this week's update.*

### **MIA RECEIVES \$3.4 MILLION TRANSPORTATION GRANT**

OIA and Miami International Airport were notified this week that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded the airport and the county \$3,462,000 to improve the terminal building through the construction of roof rehabilitation in concourse D. This grant comes on the heels of MIA's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which has included the four-year-old South Terminal and a brand new North Terminal which combines to serve approximately 95 percent of the airport's passengers.

Connecting both terminal facilities and the airport's parking garages is a system of moving walkways on the third level. In addition, the MIA Mover, an above-ground, automated people mover system, will quickly and seamlessly connect MIA passengers to the airport's four-level, consolidated Rental Car Center and Miami-Dade County's own "grand central station" - the Miami Intermodal Center.

### **3% WITHHOLDING REPEAL**

A tentative press conference is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14, at 3:00PM, in the House with Congressman Wally Herger and others in support of their efforts to get 3% repeal legislation passed. The US Chamber of Commerce and the Withholding Coalition will be participating in the press conference as a show of support and to thank Rep. Herger and others for their leadership.

Commissioner Sally Heyman, who has been a strong leader and tireless advocate in support of this legislation, has written several letters to committee members urging them to move this legislation forward. The Commissioner, OIA and Department of Procurement Management Director Miriam Singer continue to work with the Florida Congressional delegation on the 3% repeal.

To date, HR 674 has 232 cosponsors, including Reps. Ros-Lehtinen, Diaz-Balart and Rivera. Sen. Rubio is a sponsor of the Senate companion bill. Commissioner Heyman, Director Singer and OIA remain optimistic that the other members of the county's delegation will sign-on to the bill in the coming weeks.

## **THE AMERICAN JOBS ACT**

On Thursday, before a joint session of Congress, President Obama unveiled his plan for job creation. The American Jobs Act, according to the White House, will put more people back to work and put more money in the pockets of working Americans and will do so without adding a dime to the deficit. Below are the highlights of the bill as released by the White House:

### ***1. Tax Cuts to Help America's Small Businesses Hire and Grow***

- Cutting the payroll tax in half for 98 percent of businesses: The President's plan will cut in half the taxes paid by businesses on their first \$5 million in payroll, targeting the benefit to the 98 percent of firms that have payroll below this threshold.
- A complete payroll tax holiday for added workers or increased wages: The President's plan will completely eliminate payroll taxes for firms that increase their payroll by adding new workers or increasing the wages of their current worker (the benefit is capped at the first \$50 million in payroll increases).
- Extending 100% expensing into 2012: This continues an effective incentive for new investment.
- Reforms and regulatory reductions to help entrepreneurs and small businesses access capital.

### ***2. Putting Workers Back on the Job While Rebuilding and Modernizing America***

- A "Returning Heroes" hiring tax credit for veterans: This provides tax credits from \$5,600 to \$9,600 to encourage the hiring of unemployed veterans.
- Preventing up to 280,000 teacher layoffs, while keeping cops and firefighters on the job.
- Modernizing at least 35,000 public schools across the country, supporting new science labs, Internet-ready classrooms and renovations at schools across the country, in rural and urban areas.
- Immediate investments in infrastructure and a bipartisan National Infrastructure Bank, modernizing our roads, rail, airports and waterways while putting hundreds of thousands of workers back on the job.
- A New "Project Rebuild", which will put people to work rehabilitating homes, businesses and communities, leveraging private capital and scaling land banks and other public-private collaborations.

- Expanding access to high-speed wireless as part of a plan for freeing up the nation's spectrum.

### **3. Pathways Back to Work for Americans Looking for Jobs.**

- The most innovative reform to the unemployment insurance program in 40 years: As part of an extension of unemployment insurance to prevent 5 million Americans looking for work from losing their benefits, the President's plan includes innovative work-based reforms to prevent layoffs and give states greater flexibility to use UI funds to best support job-seekers, including:
  - *Work-Sharing*: UI for workers whose employers choose work-sharing over layoffs.
  - *A new "Bridge to Work" program*: The plan builds on and improves innovative state programs where those displaced take temporary, voluntary work or pursue on-the-job training.
  - *Innovative entrepreneurship and wage insurance programs*: States will also be empowered to implement wage insurance to help reemploy older workers and programs that make it easier for unemployed workers to start their own businesses.
- A \$4,000 tax credit to employers for hiring long-term unemployed workers.
- Prohibiting employers from discriminating against unemployed workers when hiring.
- Expanding job opportunities for low-income youth and adults through a fund for successful approaches for subsidized employment, innovative training programs and summer/year-round jobs for youth.

### **4. Tax Relief for Every American Worker and Family**

- Cutting payroll taxes in half for 160 million workers next year: The President's plan will expand the payroll tax cut passed last year to cut workers payroll taxes in half in 2012 – providing a \$1,500 tax cut to the typical American family, without negatively impacting the Social Security Trust Fund.
- Allowing more Americans to refinance their mortgages at today's near 4 percent interest rates, which can put more than \$2,000 a year in a family's pocket.

### **5. Fully Paid for as Part of the President's Long-Term Deficit Reduction Plan.**

- To ensure that the American Jobs Act is fully paid for, the President will call on the Joint Committee to come up with additional deficit reduction necessary to pay for the Act and still meet its deficit target. The President will, in the coming days, release a detailed plan that will show how he can do that while achieving the additional deficit reduction.

## **VERDE GARDENS GRAND OPENING**

On Wednesday, OIA participated in the grand opening of Verde Gardens, a new housing complex for the homeless located in South Miami-Dade County.

Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust Executive Director David Raymond recognized the leadership of Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen and Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart for their support of the project. OIA was also recognized by Director Raymond for its efforts in working with the delegation to secure the necessary legislation that made the federal land available to make the Verde Gardens project a reality.

The Verde Gardens Townhouse Community contains 145 units, will house up to 580 residents, has a 22-acre farm and a public market that will offer jobs for residents. The residents will also tend to the farm and have the chance to start small businesses from what they produce. The community, located at 12700 SW 280th St., resides on the former Homestead Air Force Base, which closed due to damages caused by Hurricane Andrew.

## **URBAN AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE (UASI) “FLY – IN”**

Next Wednesday (9/14) and Thursday (9/15), DEM, MDPD and OIA will participate in a UASI “Fly-in.” Meeting participants will visit Capitol Hill offices to advocate for UASI funding and Tier 1 Status for the Ft. Lauderdale/Miami UASI. UASI jurisdictions represented in the Hill meetings will be Broward County, City of Ft. Lauderdale, City of Homestead, City of Miami, City of Miami Gardens, City of Miramar, City of Pembroke Pines, Miami-Dade County, Monroe County, and Palm Beach County.

Earlier this year, Chairman Martinez joined elected officials nationwide, including City of Miami Mayor Regalado and Orange County Mayor Jacobs, in successfully urging Congress to remove language in the FY2012 House Homeland Security Apportions bill that would have only provided funding to ten UASI jurisdictions.

## **CONGRESSMAN DIAZ-BALART HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE ON REDISTRICTING HEARING**

Reps. Corrine Brown and Mario Diaz-Balart held a media availability session Friday morning at The Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. United States Courthouse, immediately following a federal court hearing on the constitutionality of Amendment 6, one of two so-called “Fair Districts” Amendments. The court hearing heard arguments about whether the United States’ Constitution permits changes to rules governing federal elections through

Florida's ballot initiatives process. The pair released the following statement in regards to the redistricting court hearing on Friday, September 9::

"Today's ruling was disappointing, but as many of you know this is a long process we will continue to stand firm and fight for the Constitution. We took an oath of office to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and that is precisely why we are here today. We strongly believe the Amendment is unconstitutional and could cause irreparable damage to the federal electoral process and thwart the drawing of districts where minorities have the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice."

## **SENATE REPUBLICANS URGE OBAMA TO SEND CONGRESS FTA BILLS**

Wednesday afternoon several Republican Senators held a press conference to push the Administration to send the three pending free trade agreements (FTAs) to the Hill for approval. On the same day, the House took up a bill to reauthorize the Generalized System of Preferences, which governs trade with developing nations. That legislation would extend the program through July 2013. The bill could be used as a vehicle in the Senate to pass the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) bill. The White House and Democrats have insisted that a TAA extension be part of approving the Colombia, South Korea and Panama FTAs.

In addition to the Senate Republicans press conference, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell authored an op-ed on the FTAs in Wednesday's edition of the Washington Post. The op-ed is available here - <http://tinyurl.com/3qu4qxq>

In his speech before a joint session of Congress on Thursday to unveil his jobs proposals, President Obama urged Congress to ratify the free-trade agreements signed with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. "Now it's time to clear the way for a series of trade agreements that would make it easier for American companies to sell their products in Panama and Colombia and South Korea, while also helping the workers whose jobs have been affected by global competition," the president said.

## **MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AEROSPACE SHOW (MIAS) - UPDATE**

Beacon Council, OIA, the DC lobbying team and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen's office continue efforts to secure the necessary Federal approvals to host the MIAS at Homestead Air Reserve Base. The Congresswoman is leading an effort to convene a meeting with Air Force personnel and county officials to determine acceptable next steps in the process. The meeting request is pending.

## **PORT OF MIAMI DEEP DREDGE - UPDATE**

OIA and the D.C. lobbying team continue to work with Seaport Director Bill Johnson to obtain the necessary federal approvals for the next phase of the Port's Deep Dredge Project, a construction advanced funds agreement. The Senate has signed off on the

agreement and the House is expected to sign off in the very near future. The Office of Management and Budget has already given its approval for this next phase of the project to proceed. OIA will continue to work with the Florida Congressional Delegation, key members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Administration, to complete this critical phase of the Port of Miami's deep dredge project.

## **HUD VOUCHER ISSUE**

OIA continues to work with Rep. Diaz-Balart's office and the rest of the county 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 while the department was in HUD receivership, 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. On June 16, Chairman Martinez again sent a letter to HUD, requesting an adequate explanation regarding HUD's calculation of the recapture amount and lack of corrective action.

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

## **ODDS, ENDS & LOOKING AHEAD**

### **House and Senate Resolutions of Disapproval regarding debt ceiling increase**

Immediately following the President's speech on his job creation agenda before a joint session of Congress, the Senate will vote regarding a resolution of disapproval (S J Res 25) that would block the President from accessing a second \$500 billion installment of borrowing authority that was included as part of the debt ceiling deal. Under the terms set by the final deal on the debt ceiling on August 2nd, the \$14.3 trillion debt limit was increased immediately by \$400 billion upon the President's request. A second round of \$500 billion in borrowing authority would be made available unless Congress blocked it with a resolution of disapproval. If the resolution of disapproval were to become law, it would require the Office of Management and Budget to trim spending by \$400 billion through a sequestration process.

The House and Senate have both drafted resolutions of disapproval and plan to vote on the resolutions but these votes are purely symbolic and have no chance of becoming a law. These votes give Republicans a way to express their objections to the debt issues in the U.S. and also provide another chance to force Democrats into another uncomfortable vote regarding the debt ceiling.

Currently, 51 Republicans have signed on to the House Resolution of which those from Florida include, Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Rep. Connie Mack (R-FL), Rep. Allen West (R-FL). 25 Republican Senators are co-sponsors of the Senate Resolution including Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)

### **Speaker Boehner and Leader Cantor Present Jobs Plan**

House Speaker John Boeher (R-OH) and Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) sent a letter to President Obama highlighting several House-passed jobs bills that remain stalled in the Senate and outlining potential opportunities for Congress and the White House to work together this fall on jobs.

The letter highlights the regulatory and tax initiatives identified in the legislative calendar released by Leader Cantor on August 29th. Additional highlights include:

- They propose eliminating the 10% set-aside of state surface transportation funds to transportation enhancements (such as education activities; scenic easements, historic preservation, etc) will enable those funds to be directed towards infrastructure projects without raising the deficit;
- They support efforts to expedite the permitting process for construction projects;
- They are willing to work with the Administration to implement a national program similar to the “Georgia Works” program (this program was also highlighted in the USCM jobs agenda and will reportedly be a component of the President’s jobs agenda as well); and
- They support passage of the three pending trade agreements and Trade Adjustment Assistance legislation (also highlighted in the USCM agenda).

### **Surface Transportation Bill Approved by Senate EPW Committee**

Earlier this week, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee convened to consider and vote on an extension of SAFETEA-LU, the current surface transportation bill. The extension titled the “Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012” would extend SAFETEA-LU through January 31, 2012 and is “clean” and therefore did not include any policy reforms or funding cuts. This extension was a necessary stop gap measure since the current extension of SAFETEA-LU is set to expire on September 30, 2011. This latest extension would provide the committees with

jurisdiction over reauthorization with four more months to complete their work and get a final bill signed into law.

With regard to EPW's plans moving forward, Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) stated that the Committee is "ready to go" forward with their two-year bill, previously referred to as "MAP-21," but is at a standstill without an identified \$12 billion in funding by the Senate Finance Committee. MAP-21 will authorize surface transportation programs for two years at current spending levels, with an adjustment for inflation and an expansion of the TIFIA program, along with other policy reforms.

Next, the Senate will vote on the extension then it's up to the House to act before the end of the month. OIA and the D.C. lobbying team will continue to monitor the extension and the committee's progress with reauthorization.

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES WEEKLY WEBINAR**

On Thursday, Climate Communities held their weekly webinar, titled Utilizing EPA Brownfields Funding for Local Sustainability Efforts. Megan Quinn and Lura Matthews from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency both participated in the webinar. Ms. Quinn is from EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization and Ms. Matthews is from the EPA's Center for Program Analysis and leads EPA's Repowering America's Lands initiative.

According to Climate Communities, last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Brownfields program provided more than \$85 million to communities and Tribes throughout the country for local brownfield projects. These types of awards were focused around environmentally contaminated properties but many grants were also provided to projects that also incentivized economic development, enhanced local sustainability and increased community outreach.

Climate Communities said, "While EPA Brownfield Cleanup grants are largely limited to remediation, Brownfield Assessment and Area-Wide Planning grants can be used to develop reuse plans and economic development analyses. Although the precise level of funding available for these programs in FY 2012 is still unknown, EPA is expected to begin soliciting applications for its FY 2012 Brownfield grant programs in the next month."

## **GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD - 2012**

Here is a list of candidates who have announced they will run, and some other potential candidates.

### *OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED WILL RUN:*

Michele Bachmann – Minnesota Congresswoman  
Herman Cain – former CEO of Godfather's Pizza

Newt Gingrich – former Speaker of the House  
Jon Huntsman – former Gov. of Utah & former Ambassador to China  
Gary Johnson – former Gov. of New Hampshire  
Ron Paul – Texas Congressman  
Rick Perry – Gov. of Texas  
Buddy Roemer – former Gov. of Louisiana  
Mitt Romney – former Gov. of Massachusetts  
Rick Santorum – former Sen. from Pennsylvania  
Thaddeus McCotter – Michigan Congressman

*YET TO OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE:*

Rudy Giuliani – former Mayor of New York City  
Sarah Palin – former Gov. of Alaska

## **FEDERAL LOBBYIST REPORTS**

Please use the following link to access the monthly lobbyist reports for the Washington D.C. lobbying team - [http://www.miamidade.gov/intergov/federal\\_lobbyist.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/intergov/federal_lobbyist.asp)

## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER 12 – SEPTEMBER 16**

*The House & Senate will be in session next week.*