

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

LEGISLATIVE DAILY BRIEF



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Comprehensive Planning

The Senate Comprehensive Planning Committee passed SB 1174 relating to Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) by Senator Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton). The bill passed on a 4 to 2 vote; special thanks go out to Senators Nancy Argenziano (R-Crystal River), Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton), Bill Posey (R-Rockledge), and Steven Geller (D-Hallandale Beach).

The proposed legislation improves the DRI review process. The DRI program is a vehicle that provides state and regional review of local land use decisions regarding large developments that because of their character, magnitude, or location, would have a substantial effect on the "health, safety, or welfare" of the citizens of more than one county. Examples of land uses for which DRI guidelines are established include: airports; attraction and recreational facilities; industrial plants and industrial parks; office parks; port facilities, including marinas; hotel and motel development; retail and service, recreational vehicle, multi-use, residential developments; and schools.

The processing and scope of review for DRI has not changed in 20 years, even though Florida now has comprehensive plans, land development regulations, and widely imposed impact fees. The environmental community is very content with the current system and do not want to see any changes. However, this process is time consuming and duplicative with regulatory agencies. The DRI process usually takes over one year, and is always very costly. Routine costs to a developer can easily exceed tens of thousands of dollars. SB 1174 will be heard next by the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

AIF supports legislation that cuts red tape, streamlines the permitting process, and keeps the cost reasonable for developments that bring responsible growth, infrastructure, and the goods and services that come with it.

Taxation

HB 1217 by Representative Frank Attkisson (R-Kissimmee) was heard by the House Business Regulation Committee today. The bill's purpose is to prevent a loss of state revenue by assuring that neither public utilities nor governmental utilities enjoy an unfair competitive advantage in the marketplace as a result of an uneven application of various taxes and fees. Therefore, the bill waives certain tax exemptions that may provide an advantage to governmental utilities over private sector utilities in the utility marketplace.

Two substitute amendments to the “strike everything” amendment were debated. The first substitute amendment was considered friendly by the bill’s sponsor and passed without objections. The second substitute amendment was very controversial as it would establish a moratorium on the issuance of any governmental debt while a study commission looked at the telecommunications aspect of this bill. The bill’s sponsor considered the amendment unfriendly, and after much debate and discussion, the amendment was passed by a vote of 18 – 17. The “strike everything” amendment was then accepted without objection.

After a lot of public testimony both in favor and against the bill, the bill passed the committee on a vote of 34-1. The bill will next be heard by the House State Administration Committee.

AIF supports the position of private enterprise competing with governmental utilities on a level playing field.

Please send your comments or suggestions to us at aif@aif.com or call the Governmental Affairs department at (850)224-7173.

- For more information on all of the important legislative information concerning the business community, go to our “members only” Florida Business Network web site at <http://fbnnet.com>
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