



DAILY BRIEF

From April 22, 2009

Wednesday was an extremely short day at the Capitol, especially given the fact that there are only ten days left in the 2009 session. As is normally the case towards the end of session, rumors abound about the possibility of extensions or not finishing by the last day of session. This year; however, there is a greater chance of that happening given the big differences between the House and Senate on a number of issues, most importantly the budget. Towards the end of the day, **Governor Charlie Crist** held a press conference to announce the possibility of an immediate influx of revenue in the form of a \$500 million payment from the Seminole Tribe of Florida – in return for passage of the Seminole Indian Gaming Compact. The announcement was met with skepticism by both [Representative Bill Galvano \(R-Bradenton\)](#) and [Senator Dennis Jones \(R-Seminole\)](#) – they lead negotiators for each chamber on the gaming compact.

A number of AIF priority issues are poised to see action on Thursday. Both House and Senate version of legislation dealing with Surplus Lines Insurance will be considered on the floor as well as AIF's Florida Maritime Council's top priority this year – [HB 7141](#) dealing with seaport security.

Business Regulation

Today, the Florida House of Representatives unanimously approved (118-0) [HB 73](#) Relating to Expedited Permitting Process for Economic Development Projects by [Representative Robert Schenck \(R-Springhill\)](#).

For the second straight year AIF has worked with **Representative Schenck** on this piece of legislation, which is crafted to curb the wait time for businesses to receive approval or denial from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or regional Water Management Districts. Current law states that the reviewing body has up to 90 days to approve or deny certain environmental related applications. This legislation would cut that wait time in half (45 days) for economic development projects defined as a "Targeted Business" for the region, and implement a process by which a mandatory pre-application meeting to review the paperwork is completed prior to the 45 day clock beginning. Additionally, the bill requires local governments to grant approval for this expedited process by passing a resolution stating that the local government supported the expedited permitting process for the project.

This legislation is a compromise by the bill sponsor, DEP and the Water Management Districts, all of which have stood in committees and supported the measure this session.

[HB 73](#) will now be sent to the Senate for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation aimed at improving the permitting process for existing businesses in Florida and for those companies looking to invest in our state. AIF has been out in front on this issue and has included it in our Economic Stimulus Package 2.0 (ESP 2.0) as a top priority in finding ways that the state can help stimulate the economy through reduced regulation.

Health Care

Today, the Florida House of Representatives unanimously approved (117-0) [HB 285](#) Relating to Medicaid Low-Income Pool and Disproportionate Share Program by [Representative Jimmy Patronis \(R-Panama City\)](#). The bill aims to modify the makeup of the Low Income Pool (LIP) Council. The LIP Council is currently made up of representatives from the hospitals that receive income from the \$1 billion in Federal funds it draws down yearly. The bill also ensures that no registered lobbyist can serve on the council, as well as expands membership to non-hospital representatives.

[HB 285](#) will now be sent to the Senate for consideration.

AIF SUPPORTS legislation that eliminates the Low Income Pool (LIP) Council and places responsibility for recommendation and distribution of these funds in the hands of the Legislature and experts at the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).

Insurance

Today, the Florida Senate temporarily postponed [SB 1950](#) Relating to Insurance by [Senator Garrett Richter \(R-Naples\)](#) to allow more time for the House and Senate to attempt to reconcile the differences in their bills. The legislation aims to reduce potential assessments (hurricane taxes) against businesses' insurance premiums by reducing the state's Hurricane Catastrophe Fund coverage as well as by making the state-run property insurance company, Citizens, actuarially sound.

[SB 1950](#) will await further consideration on the Senate floor.

AIF supports this legislation as a way to remove and increase Citizens' rates; reduce Cat Fund coverages; continue the state's home hurricane loss mitigation program, My Safe Florida Home; and encourage the restoration of Florida's private property insurance market.

Today, the Florida House of Representatives approved (105-13) [HB 1171](#) Relating to Residential Property Insurance by [Representative Bill Proctor \(R-St. Augustine\)](#). The bill permits insurers, meeting certain financial requirements, to issue a residential property insurance policy that is not subject to a determination by the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) stating that the rate is excessive or unfairly discriminatory. The Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) is only authorized to disapprove a rate for this type of policy if the rate is inadequate or contains unlawful discriminatory factors. The bill also requires notice to the consumer in the application for the policy that the policy is subject to limited rate regulation.

[HB 1171](#) will now be sent to the Senate for consideration.

AIF supports legislation that initiates efforts to restore the private property insurance market in Florida. HB 1171 gives homeowners a choice among the well-established, national insurance companies and prevents these policies from being assessed additional hurricane taxes following a hurricane.