

LEGISLATIVE BILL SUMMARIES

Florida League of Cities



Volume 51, Issue 1: December 20, 2024

FINANCE AND TAXATION

Tax Exemption for Disabled Ex-servicemembers (Monitor)

HB 39 (Daley) seeks to increase the property tax exemption for certain disabled ex-servicemembers in Florida from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The dollar amount of the exemption is the only change proposed to this existing homestead property tax exemption. (Chapman)

HOUSING

Housing for Legally Verified Agricultural Workers (Monitor)

SB 84 (Collins) prohibits governmental entities from adopting or enforcing any legislation that inhibits the construction of housing for legally verified agricultural workers on land operated as a bona fide farm. The bill defines the terms “housing site” and “legally verified agricultural worker.” It provides that housing units for legally verified agricultural workers must meet specified criteria, including separation, maximum square footage, setback and screening requirements. The bill also specifies provisions for removal of housing that fails to satisfy minimum criteria and grandfathers housing sites constructed before July 2025 unless the housing site is modified. (O’Hara)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 43 (Edmonds) – Reusable Tenant Screening Reports

NATURAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC LAND

Nature-based Methods for Improving Coastal Resilience (Monitor)

SB 50 (Garcia) directs the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to adopt rules governing nature-based methods to improve coastal resilience. The bill

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requires DEP to include provisions in the rules encouraging local governments to develop or participate in coastal resilience and ecosystem restoration projects. DEP will also be required to identify vulnerable properties along the coastline and encourage partnerships with local governments to create protection and restoration zone programs, including eligible opportunities through the Resilient Florida Grant Program. (Singer)

Recreational Customary Use of Beaches (Support)

HB 6001 (Rudman) repeals Florida Statute 163.035, which limits the ability of local governments establishing "customary use" ordinances to allow public access to private beaches. Currently, the law prohibits local governments from enacting ordinances or rules that grant public access to private beach property above the mean high-water line, unless a court has made a judicial declaration affirming such use. This bill removes that statute, effectively eliminating the requirement for a judicial declaration before public access can be granted to private beach areas. (Singer)

State Land Management (Support)

SB 80 (Harrell) establishes the State Park Preservation Act, addressing concerns raised by the controversial and now withdrawn Great Outdoors Initiative, which had proposed adding golf courses, hotels and other recreational infrastructure to various state parks. The bill requires the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to hold public hearings when developing or updating land management plans. The bill also requires DEP to publish notice and electronic copies of proposed plans within a specific timeframe before public hearings. Relevant to local governments, the bill also mandates that any large parcels or projects within more than one county must receive input at a public hearing from an advisory group formed of several individuals, including a local elected official. (Singer)

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Other Bills of Interest

SB 56 (Garcia) – Weather Modification Activities

OTHER

School Buses (Monitor)

SB 52 (Garcia) expands the definition of “school bus” to include transportation of students to and from charter and private schools throughout statute. (Wagoner)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 100 (Fine) – Display of Flags by Governmental Entities

PERSONNEL AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Firefighter Benefits (Monitor)

SB 66 (Garcia) seeks to expand the Florida firefighters’ cancer treatment benefits by adding Acute Myeloid Leukemia to the list of “cancers” presumed to have been incurred in the line of duty. The adjustment to the definition is the only change being proposed to Section 112.1816, Florida Statutes, in this bill. Additionally, language is being added to the bill to state the Legislature determines and declares that this act fulfills an important state interest. (Chapman)

Heat Illness Prevention (Monitor)

HB 35 (Gottlieb) implements mandatory outdoor heat exposure safety programs for employers defined in Section 121.021(10), Florida Statutes, which identifies municipalities as subject to this bill. The safety programs apply to employers with outdoor workers in industries like agriculture, construction and landscaping, but exempt employees working outdoors for less than 15 minutes per hour through the workday. The bill also mandates the development and administration of training

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programs, drinking water and shade provisions. Further, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Department of Health are directed to adopt rules to implement the program, including training and certification compliance. (Chapman)

Peer Support for First Responders (Monitor)

SB 86 (Burgess) expands the definition of "first responder" for the purpose of qualifying for peer support benefits. Currently, Florida law provides a confidential peer support program offering emotional, physical or moral support to first responders, including firefighters, police officers, emergency medical service workers and 911 telecommunicators. SB 86 would extend eligibility for this program to include all non-officer employees of law enforcement agencies. (Chapman)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 76 (Berman) – Paid Parental Leave

PUBLIC SAFETY

Victims of Domestic Violence and Dating Violence (Oppose)

HB 19 (Hinson) creates the "Helping Abuse Victims Escape Now (HAVEN) Act," providing a coordinating council created under the Department of Law Enforcement, which will oversee the development of a dynamic website for domestic and dating violence victims. Of concern to cities, the bill includes a provision that preempts local governments from enacting or enforcing regulations that conflict with the creation and implementation of the HAVEN Act. The bill specifies that any local laws, rules or regulations related to matters covered by the HAVEN Act—such as the operation of the website and related victim services—are superseded by this state law. (Wagoner)

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Other Bills of Interest

SB 088 (Wright) – Utility Terrain Vehicles

RESILIENCY

Other Bills of Interest

SB 62 (Rodriguez) – Resilient Buildings

UTILITIES

Municipal Water and Sewer Utility Rates (Monitor)

HB 11 (Robinson, F.) requires a municipality that operates a water or sewer utility providing services to customers in another recipient municipality using a facility or plant located in the recipient municipality to charge customers in the recipient municipality the same rates, fees and charges it imposes on customers within its own municipal boundaries. (O'Hara)