

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL SUMMARIES

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SPOTLIGHT BILLS

- **Affordable Housing:** SB 184 (Gaetz) and HB 247 (Conerly) – Monitor (see page 22)
- **Building Permits for a Single-family Dwelling:** SB 1128 (Ingoglia) and HB 1035 (Esposito) – Oppose (see page 2)
- **Community Redevelopment Agencies:** HB 991 (Giallombardo) – Oppose (see page 14)
- **Housing:** HB 923 (Lopez, V.) – Oppose (see page 23)
- **Land Use and Development Regulations:** HB 1209 (Steele) and SB 1118 (McClain) – Oppose (see page 41)
- **Local Business Taxes:** HB 503 (Botana) – Oppose (see page 16)
- **Real Property and Land Use and Development:** HB 943 (Lopez, V.) – Oppose (see page 29)
- **Rural Communities:** SB 110 (Simon) – Monitor (see page 8)
- **Suits Against the Government:** HB 301 (McFarland) – Oppose (see page 59)

BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

Building and Plumbing Permits for the Use of Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (Monitor)

HB 287 (Conerly) revises current law relating to the issuance of local government building and plumbing permits for buildings that use onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (OSTDS). Current law prohibits a city or county from issuing a building or plumbing permit for a building that requires an OSTDS unless the owner or builder “has received” a construction permit for the OSTDS from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The bill revises this statement to prohibit the local government from issuing such permits unless the owner or builder has “applied for” the OSTDS permit from DEP. **SB 1120** (Ingoglia) prohibits a city or county from requiring as a condition of issuing a building permit for a single-family dwelling that

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an applicant first obtain a construction permit from DEP for the OSTDS. SB 1120 also specifies that a construction permit for an OSTDS for a single-family dwelling is valid in perpetuity from the date of issuance, except for work seaward of the coastal construction control line. (O'Hara)

Building Permits for a Single-family Dwelling (Oppose)

SB 1128 (Ingoglia) and **HB 1035** (Esposito) provide that a building permit issued by a local government pursuant to section 553.79, Florida Statutes, for a single-family dwelling may not expire before the effective date of the next edition of the Florida Building Code, which is updated every three years. The bills also specify that a permit application for the construction of a single-family dwelling in a jurisdiction for which a state of emergency was issued within 24 months before the application, and which is signed and sealed by a licensed architect or engineer that the plans comply with the Florida Building Code, is deemed approved. The bills require the applicable local government to issue the building permit within two days after such approval. (O'Hara)

Building Regulation (Monitor)

HB 707 (Franklin) revises various statutes relating to building code administrators and inspectors. It removes licensed building code administrators and inspectors from being eligible for an exemption from certain continuing education requirements. The bill authorizes local building officials to perform services for certain educational authorities pursuant to an interagency service agreement. It revises the definition of "residential inspector" to exclude triplexes and to include certain townhomes of three stories or less. It requires the Florida Building Code Administrators and Inspectors Board to establish a certain application with voluntary categories for each category of plans examiners, requires the board to amend eligibility criteria for certain inspector certifications, and requires the board to create certain internship programs. It exempts owners of property acting as their own contractors from certain requirements in Chapter 489, Part II, relating to construction contracting and authorizes the owner (excluding a corporate entity) to sign a

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building permit application and disclosure statement. The bill revises section 489.1195, Florida Statutes, to define the term “change of contractor” and to revise requirements associated with a change in contractor. It revises section 713.135, Florida Statutes, relating to notice of commencement and applicability of lien by requiring an applicant to file a notice of commencement if a direct contract is greater than \$7,500 and revising requirements associated with a notice of commencement. **SB 740** (Harrell) removes licensed building code administrators and inspectors from being eligible for an exemption from certain continuing education requirements. (O’Hara)

Construction Contracting (Monitor)

HB 755 (Daley) revises various laws relating to construction contracting. Of relevance to municipalities are provisions that direct the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to develop a standardized disciplinary form to be used by local construction regulation boards to uniformly report violations of state law relating to construction contracting. It requires local construction regulation boards to search the Department’s automated system for any recorded disciplinary forms before issuing a license or registration and to report annually to the Department about the implementation of these requirements. (O’Hara)

Fire Prevention (Monitor)

HB 551 (Borrero) amends current law provisions relating to local government approval of permits for alteration of fire alarm systems and fire sprinkler system projects. The bill defines “alteration,” which means to add, install, relocate, replace, or remove. It amends the definition of “fire alarm system project” to include the replacement of an existing fire alarm system panel with the same make and model as the existing panel. The bill requires a local enforcement agency to issue a permit for such projects within two business days after submission of a completed application and authorizes a contractor to commence work immediately after submission of a completed application. Any inspection required by the local

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enforcement agency must be performed within 24 hours after such inspection is requested. If the local enforcement agency determines it needs additional documentation, the bill requires a contractor to provide such documentation within four business days after the inspection. The bill prohibits a local enforcement agency from requiring additional plan reviews or documentation of areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work. If a local government fails to meet any deadline required in the statute, the bill requires the local government to reduce the permit fee by 10% for each business day after such failure unless the parties agree otherwise or the delay is caused by the applicant or extraordinary circumstances. The bill requires a local enforcement agency to establish a simplified permitting process that complies with the statute. In addition, the bill amends the Florida Fire Prevention Code to specify that if a local government fails to adhere to the Code's requirements when adopting a local amendment to the Code, the local amendment is rescinded immediately. If the local government fails to do so, the local fire marshal is subject to disciplinary action under section 633.106, Florida Statutes. (O'Hara)

Florida Building Code (Monitor)

SB 838 (DiCeglie) amends the Florida Building Code to prohibit a local government from adopting a local lookback ordinance for substantial improvements or repairs to a structure that is more stringent than the Florida Building Code. The bill does not define "local lookback ordinance," but the term generally means an ordinance that authorizes a governmental entity to review past building permits or construction projects within a specific timeframe to check for compliance with current building codes, even if the project was completed before the new ordinance was enacted. The bill further provides that a local lookback ordinance adopted before July 2025 is void and unenforceable. (O'Hara)

Issuance of Address and Individual Parcel Identification Numbers (Monitor)

HB 381 (Holcomb) and **SB 784** (Ingoglia) require the appropriate governing body, within two weeks after the recording of a plat, to issue the street and mailing address, along with individual parcel identification numbers, as contained in the plat

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offered for recording. If the appropriate governing body fails to issue the information within the 2-week period, the building permit fee shall be reduced by 10% for each day the body fails to issue the information. (O'Hara)

Panelized Construction (Monitor)

SB 902 (Martin) defines the term "panelized construction" as any building with non-concealed mechanical, electrical, and plumbing components created by the off-site fabrication of structural components or panels, which are then transported to the construction site for assembly. The term includes walls, floors, and roof sections typically made from wood, metal, or concrete. It provides that panelized construction is not required to have state approval but must comply with all local requirements of the governmental agency having jurisdiction at the installation site. (O'Hara)

Preemption of the Regulation of Hoisting Equipment (Support)

HB 6009 (Cross) and **SB 346** (Rouson) remove provisions of current law that preempt the regulation of hoisting equipment to the state. (O'Hara)

Private Provider Building Inspection Services (Oppose)

HB 695 (Gentry) substantially revises current laws relating to private provider building inspectors to grant additional authority and autonomy to private providers and to remove authority from local building officials. It adds private providers to the list of persons required to be appointed to the Florida Building Code Administrators and Inspectors Board and the Florida Building Commission. It purports to "clarify" that local building officials may only review private provider submissions for "completeness," prohibits local building officials from re-doing or duplicating private provider services, and prohibits local building officials from conducting site visits when the owner or builder is using a private provider. It prohibits a local government from charging additional fees (including an administrative fee) for building inspections if the owner or contractor hires a private provider to perform such services. It revises provisions relating to a private provider's notice of required inspections. The bill prohibits local governments from requiring private providers to

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use electronic portals or submission systems to submit documents. It provides that a local building official is not responsible for the regulatory administration or supervision of building code inspection services performed by a private provider and provides that private providers are vested with the authority of, and must serve as, the local building official with respect to certain services, including the issuance of building permits. The bill requires that building permits issued by a private provider be available on the private provider association's website, accessible to the public only by payment of a fee. In addition, it provides that a private provider is solely responsible for securing the review and approval of other local, regional, or state entities and utilities. It requires private providers to use forms provided by the Florida Building Commission rather than forms acceptable to the local building official. The bill creates a cause of action for damages and injunctive relief by private providers against local building officials or local governments for violating provisions of laws applicable to private providers, for "disparaging" private providers, or for "interfering" with private providers. (O'Hara)

Private Providers/Alternative Plans Review and Inspections (Monitor)

SB 1134 (Calatayud) and **HB 1071** (Benarroch) revise current law relating to alternative plans review and inspections pursuant to section 553.791, Florida Statutes. The bills revise the definition of "single-trade inspection" and add "single-trade plans review" within the definition to include any inspection or plans review focused on a single construction trade. The bills add "solar energy and energy storage installations or alterations" within this definition. For single-trade plans review, the bills authorize a private provider to use any automated or software-based plans review system. The bills require a local building official to issue a requested permit to a private provider for single-trade plans review for single-family or two-family dwellings no more than five days after receipt of permit application. (O'Hara)

Underground Utility and Excavation Contractors (Monitor)

SB 808 (Yarborough) and **HB 869** (Sapp) revise the current law definition of "underground utility and excavation contractor" in Chapters 489 and 633, Florida

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Statutes, to specify that an underground utility and excavation contractor may install piping that is an integral part of a fire protection system up to a specified distance from a building. The bills make conforming changes to various statutes within both chapter laws to reflect the revised definition. (O'Hara)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 207 (Blanco) – Door Alarms for Multifamily Residential Properties

CYBERSECURITY

Cybersecurity (Monitor)

SB 770 (Harrell) expands and clarifies roles for the Florida Digital Service while creating new requirements for the state chief technology officer. The bill tightens incident reporting requirements for local governments, reducing the reporting timeline for cybersecurity incidents from 48 to 12 hours and ransomware incidents from 12 to six hours. (Wagoner)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Construction Disruption Assistance (Monitor)

HB 215 (Eskamani) and **SB 324** (Smith, C.) establish the "Construction Disruption Assistance Act" to support small businesses directly impacted by government construction projects. An eligible small business is defined as a business with 50 or fewer employees whose primary access points are obstructed by state or local government construction activities. Grants may be awarded up to \$25,000 per construction phase when there are verifiable reductions in revenue, operation costs, or property damage. The bill also provides access to a low-interest loan of up to \$100,000 for a 3% interest rate to cover operational costs. (Wagoner)

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Contracting with Foreign Countries of Concern (Oppose)

HB 977 (Greco) prohibits governmental entities from entering into a contract to purchase computers, printers, or videoconferencing devices if the foreign country of concern has ownership in the manufacturer or its affiliates. (Wagoner)

Manufacturing (Monitor)

HB 561 (Cobb) and **SB 600** (Truenow) create the “Statewide Office of Manufacturing” within the Department of Commerce for the purpose of supporting manufacturing efforts and identifying gaps statewide. The bills require all state and local governmental entities to assist the Chief Manufacturing Officer to the extent the law and budgetary constraints provide. (Wagoner)

Rural Communities (Monitor)

SB 110 (Simon) modernizes support for fiscally constrained counties (FCC) by updating definitions and increasing the FCC threshold from \$5 million to \$10 million in property tax revenue. It boosts FCC funding to at least \$50 million annually by shifting from direct-to-home satellite service tax to sales tax and establishes new spending requirements for public safety, infrastructure, and other public purposes. The bill creates the **Office of Rural Prosperity** within the Department of Commerce to assist rural communities with economic development and grant access. It also introduces a **Rural Resource Directory** to help local governments navigate funding opportunities.

To address population declines, counties losing residents over the past decade would receive \$1 million block grants for growth initiatives. A competitive grant program would support local organizations driving economic development, site preparedness, and workforce training.

Other key provisions include:

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- Increased infrastructure and business development funding, including \$10 million for the Rural Infrastructure Fund and an expansion of the Rural Revolving Loan Program
- Broadband expansion efforts through improved coordination and funding for rural connectivity
- Transportation investments, including \$50 million annually for arterial rural roads and increased funding for small county road assistance
- Education funding enhancements, such as tripling consortia grants for small school districts and a new Rural Incentive for Professional Educators program offering up to \$15,000 in loan repayment assistance
- Healthcare access improvements, including grants for rural hospitals, startup medical practices, and enhanced Medicaid reimbursements

The bill directs over \$25 million in nonrecurring funds to improve rural healthcare, telemedicine, and emergency response services while expanding Medicaid reimbursements for rural hospitals. (Wagoner)

ENERGY

Utility Service Restrictions (Oppose)

SB 1002 (Truenow) clarifies the existing preemption on restricting the types of fuel sources of energy production utilized by utilities or gas companies to include all local government entities and their subsidiaries. The bill also expands the nullification of any local regulation that was in place before July 1, 2021. (Singer)

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ETHICS AND ELECTIONS

Elections (Monitor)

SB 394 (Garcia) revises requirements relating to security measures for electronic and electromechanical voting and other election systems. Among other things, the bill prohibits governing bodies from purchasing elections systems that are not certified by the Florida Department of State and provides criminal penalties for members of governing bodies who purchase or sell election systems in violation of state requirements. The bill broadly defines “election systems” and includes technology used for voter data, mail sorters, and election night reporting, as well as “future technologies integrated into the election process.” It directs the Department of State to adopt rules to establish minimum standards for voting and election system security measures, including a prohibition on system technology that uses wireless data communications. (O’Hara)

Employee Protections (Monitor)

SB 352 (Gaetz) and **HB 495** (Benarroch) prohibit public employers or independent contractors from taking retaliatory personnel action against an employee who reports to the Florida Commission on Ethics a violation of the state ethics code or violation of Article II, section 8(f) of the Florida Constitution (prohibiting lobbying for compensation by current public officers and former public officers for six years following service in a public position). In addition, the bills prohibit public employers

and independent contractors from taking retaliatory personal action against any employee who discloses information to the Florida Commission on Ethics relating to an alleged breach of the public trust or alleged violation of Article II, section 8(f). The bills define and describe the prohibited adverse personnel actions and specify the types of information disclosed by employees subject to the bills’ protections. The bills specify procedures, timeframes, and available remedies for employees subject to prohibited adverse personnel actions. Local government employees may file a

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complaint with the appropriate local government authority if the authority has established, by ordinance, an administrative procedure for handling such complaints and if the local procedure provides for such complaints to be heard by a panel of impartial persons that makes a recommendation to the governing body for final action. If the local government does not have an administrative procedure that satisfies the minimum requirements of the bills, an employee may bring a civil action. The bills authorize the filing of a civil action in circuit court following exhaustion of any administrative remedies and specifies that available remedies in such an action must include the following: reinstatement to position or its equivalent, or front pay; reinstatement of fringe benefits and seniority rights; compensation for lost wages, benefits, or other lost remuneration; payment of costs and attorney fees to a prevailing employee or prevailing employer (for frivolous actions); and injunctive relief. The bills allow employers to assert an affirmative defense that the personnel action would have been taken absent the employee's exercise of his or her rights under the bill. (O'Hara)

Ethics (Monitor)

SB 348 (Gaetz) and **HB 399** (Maney) prohibit a candidate, public officer, or public employee from knowingly misrepresenting, for material gain, that he or she is a service member or veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or that he or she received an honor, title, or occupational qualification relating to military service. In addition, the bills authorize the Florida Attorney General to notify the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or appropriate governing body of a local government of any delinquent civil penalty or restitution imposed pursuant to the state ethics law owed by a public officer or employee. The bills require the CFO or appropriate governing body to withhold a specified percentage of an official's or employee's salary to repay delinquent civil penalties and restitution and recover the governing body's administrative costs associated with compliance. Finally, the bills authorize the Attorney General to refer unpaid civil penalties and restitution to the appropriate collection agency. (O'Hara)

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Other Bills of Interest

SB 216 (Polsky) – Campaign Finance

SB 280 (Arrington) and **HB 201** (Tant) – Candidate Qualification

SB 390 (Garcia) – Ballot Boxes

SB 396 (Garcia) – Elections

SB 588 (Leek) – Campaign Communications

SB 802 (Ingoglia) and **HB 679** (Salzman) – Term Limits for County Commissioners and School Board Members

HB 831 (Jacques) – Elections & State-Issued Identification

SB 1098 (Martin) – Elections

SB 860 (Smith) – Political Advertisements by Government Officials

HB 727 (Rayner) – Use of State Resources to Influence Statewide Ballot Initiatives

SB 926 (Smith) – Public Service Announcements by State Agencies

SB 1170 (Yarborough) – Conduct in Polling Places

FINANCE AND TAXATION

Ad Valorem Property Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Quadriplegics (Monitor)

HJR 163 (Tant) and **SJR 748** (Simon) propose an amendment to Section 6, Article VII of the Florida Constitution to permit the homestead property tax exemption of a deceased quadriplegic to pass on to the quadriplegic's surviving spouse. The joint resolutions specify that the proposal will appear on the ballot at the next general election or an earlier special election. The tax exemption would apply only to those surviving spouses who owned the property in question as a homestead at the time of death of the quadriplegic spouse. (Chapman)

Ad Valorem Tax Exemption (Monitor)

SJR 318 (Truenow) is a proposed constitutional amendment to authorize tax exemptions for certain tangible personal property. If it passes with 60% voter

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approval, tangible personal property on agricultural land used in the production of agricultural products and/or owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the agricultural land will be exempt from ad valorem taxes. (Chapman)

Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Nonprofit Homes for the Aged (Monitor)

SB 298 (Wright) and **HB 321** (Smith) amend Florida's ad valorem tax exemption requirements for nonprofit homes for the aged. The bills clarify the qualifications for the tax exemption, requiring an organization to be a not-for-profit organization under Chapter 617, Florida Statutes or an entity not licensed under Chapter 429, Florida Statutes, and wholly owned by a corporation not-for-profit formed under Chapter 617, Florida Statutes. (Chapman)

Ad Valorem Taxation (Monitor)

HB 227 (Caruso) and **SB 378** (Harrell) seek to allow a property owner who has applied for a homestead exemption to rescind their application between August 1 and September 15 of the same taxable year if they meet certain criteria. The bills authorize the Department of Revenue to adopt emergency rules to implement these changes. The bills also change the definition of an exempt organization to include the property used for charitable, religious, scientific, or literary activities. The bills provide further clarification as to what is meant by "religious activities." (Chapman)

Affordable Property Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Leased Land (Monitor)

HB 411 (Chaney) and **SB 488** (DiCeglie) are identical in proposing an amendment to existing property tax exemption statutes to allow land leased from a Housing Finance Authority under specific conditions to qualify for ad valorem tax exemptions. The land must be leased for a minimum of 99 years and predominantly used for qualifying housing purposes. (Chapman)

Assessments Levied on Recreational Vehicle Parks (Monitor)

SB 530 (Burgess) would amend existing statutes to change how non-ad valorem special assessments are levied on recreation vehicle parks. RV Parks are to be

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treated in the same manner as commercial entities like hotels or motels, not residential units. Further, the bill prohibits levying special assessments on portions of RV parking spaces or campsites exceeding certain maximum square footage standards. Lastly, the bill requires local government to consider occupancy rates of RV parks to ensure assessments are fairly apportioned. (Chapman)

Child Care and Early Learning Providers (Oppose)

HB 47 (McFarland) and **SB 738** (Burton) seek to exempt public and private preschools from certain special assessments by municipalities. The bill also includes elementary and middle schools affiliated with religious institutions in the exemption criteria. (Chapman)

Community Redevelopment Agencies (Oppose)

HB 991 (Giallombardo) mandates that all community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) in existence as of July 1, 2025, must terminate by the earliest charter expiration date or by September 30, 2045. It also prohibits CRAs from initiating new projects or issuing new debt after October 1, 2025. Additionally, the bill prohibits the creation of any new CRAs after July 1, 2025. (Cruz)

Community Redevelopment Plans (Monitor)

HB 363 (Aristide) authorizes community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) to allocate up to 20% of tax increment financing funds for various business support services. The bill specifies that CRA-eligible business support services include payment of short-term rent, professional training, workforce recruitment and retention, direct loans, program development, and emergency assistance for small businesses. (Cruz)

Deferred and Unpaid Taxes (Monitor)

HB 761 (Casello) modifies the Florida tax codes by adjusting the procedures and qualifications for homestead tax deferral and the sale of tax certificates. Tax deferral eligibility on homestead property is limited to a just value of \$1 million or less. The minimum value of a tax certificate is increased from \$250 to \$500. **SB 882** (Berman)

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is similar to HB 761. The major difference is SB 882 requires a person who has waived their homestead tax exemption (but is still eligible) to furnish a certificate of eligibility prepared by the county property appraiser to qualify for the provisions of this bill. (Chapman)

Homestead Exemptions (Oppose)

SB 1018 (Ingoglia) is the implementing bill for **SJR 1016** (Ingoglia), which proposes to delete the school district property tax levy homestead exemption and increase the non-school property tax levy exemption from \$25,000 to \$75,000. (Chapman)

Homestead Property (Monitor)

SJR 326 (Rodriguez) is a proposed constitutional amendment to modify homestead exemptions for certain low-income seniors. The bill would freeze a home's assessed value at the amount recorded when the homeowner turns 65. (Chapman)

Improvement to Structures on Agricultural Lands (Monitor)

HB 589 (Brackett) and **SB 786** (Truenow) provide an exemption from property tax valuation assessments for any improvements for agricultural purposes on lands classified as agricultural. (Chapman)

Increased Homestead Property Exemptions (Oppose)

SJR 1016 (Ingoglia) is a proposed constitutional amendment increasing the non-school property tax exemption for homestead properties from \$25,000 to \$75,000. The proposal is inclusive of current law, which established an annual adjustment to this exemption by the Consumer Price Index. Additionally, the homestead exemption for school district levies is deleted. (Chapman)

Legal Tender (Monitor)

SB 132 (Rodriguez) establishes legal tender status for specie and electronic currency. Specie is money in the form of coins rather than notes. The bill provides that specie may not be characterized as personal property for taxation or regulatory purposes

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and provides exemptions from tax liability. The bill authorizes the recognition of specie legal tender for the payment of private debts, taxes, and state or local government fees. (Chapman)

Local Business Taxes (Oppose)

HB 503 (Botana) proposes to include the collection of local business taxes in the audit review process of the State Auditor General. The bill sets a base Local Business Tax revenue year for Fiscal Year 2024. There is a requirement for the reduction of fees and refunds to be issued to businesses if local government revenues exceed the revenue base year annually. The local government must provide an affidavit stating compliance with these provisions in each annual audit. The bill provides an exemption for fiscally constrained counties and the municipalities within them. (Chapman)

Local Government Assessments (Monitor)

HB 771 (Steele) would amend the current law to stop counties from using special assessments to fund certain municipal services and facilities through municipal service taxing units and municipal service benefit units. (Chapman)

Property Tax Exemptions (Oppose)

HJR 357 (Chamberlin) is a proposed constitutional amendment to establish a new \$100,000 property tax exemption applicable to all properties in Florida, including those currently not eligible for homestead exemptions. This new exemption would be in addition to the existing homestead property exemptions (\$50,000) on homestead properties. If HJR 357 is passed through the Legislature, it will be presented on the November 2026 ballot. To pass, the measure must be approved by 60% or more of the voters. (Chapman)

Property Tax Exemptions (Oppose)

HB 359 (Chamberlin) is the implementing bill for **HJR 357**, establishing a new \$100,000 exemption on all property tax levies effective January 1, 2027. (Chapman)

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Property Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Veterans (Monitor)

HB 217 (Mayfield) and **SB 290** (Wright) authorize the surviving spouses of veterans who die before the issuance of a disability letter from the U.S. Government or Department of Veterans Affairs to produce this letter to the property appraiser as evidence for entitlement to the tax exemption for surviving spouses of veterans. (Chapman)

Revenue Administration (Monitor)

SB 192 (Gruters) seeks to amend multiple Florida Statutes addressing specific tax terms and assessment procedures by repealing redundant sections and updating terminology. The bill replaces the term “tax assessor” with “property appraiser,” grants revised powers to county legislative bodies regarding tax levies and municipal service assessments and includes a special assessment exemption for agriculture property. The bill also adjusts the definitions related to property valuation and classifications. (Chapman)

Revising How Homestead Property is Assessed (Opposed)

HJR 773 (Steele) proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution that would change how homestead property is assessed for property tax purposes. The amendment would eliminate the annual assessment based on the property's current just value and instead assess properties at their most recent purchase price or, for new construction, the construction cost. This change, set to take effect on January 1, 2027, could lead to much lower property tax assessments for homeowners, particularly those who have owned their homes for a long time.

HB 775 (Steele) serves as the implementing bill for HJR 773. Definitions are included relating to changes, additions, or improvements to be assessed at documented costs rather than just value. Provisions in HB 775 adjust the assessment process for property owners replacing damaged or destroyed features on properties impacted by calamity, including specific assessments based on the extent of reconstruction. The bill provides authority for the Florida Department of Revenue to establish a grant

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program for local governments experiencing shortfalls in revenue due to the new assessment criteria and procedures. (Chapman)

Revenues from Ad Valorem Taxes (Oppose)

HB 787 (Chamberlin) and **SB 996** (Collins) change the calculation of the rolled-back rate to include new construction property values and set limits on how much the millage may exceed the rolled-back rate. If a local jurisdiction desires to set a millage rate above the rolled-back rate, it may only exceed the rolled-back rate by 102%. Local governments are not allowed to exceed the 102% cap. Any revenues collected above the amount set by the 102% cap must be returned to the taxpayers on a pro-rated basis or used to pay down local government debt. (Chapman)

Sales Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans (Monitor)

HB 111 (Daniels) would establish a sales tax exemption for disabled veterans with a 100% service-connected disability rating. The bill requires eligible veterans to apply and submit documentation required by the Department of Revenue. (Chapman)

Study on the Elimination of Property Taxes (Opposed)

SB 852 (Martin) is a proposal to require the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to study the elimination and replacement of property taxes. The study must include an analysis of how the elimination of property taxes would affect public services such as education, infrastructure, and public safety. The study must also include an assessment of the potential influence the elimination of property taxes will have on the housing market. The study must consider the attractiveness of a move to consumption-based (sales) tax for businesses related to other states. The study must determine the overall economic stability, consumer behavior, and long-term economic growth of Florida. The report is required to be submitted by October 1, 2025, if the bill is passed. (Chapman)

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Tax Exemption for Disabled Ex-servicemembers (Monitor)

HB 39 (Daley) and **SB 218** (Arrington) seek 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)

Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Quadriplegics (Monitor)

HB 165 (Tant) is the implementing bill of **HJR 163** (Tant) and **SB 750** (Simon) is the implementing bill for **SJR 748** (Simon), should they be approved by Florida voters with 60% approval. The bills allow for the surviving spouse of a deceased quadriplegic to inherit the tax exemption benefits, provided the surviving spouse is still residing in the same homestead property. The bills permit the transfer of a tax discount to a new homestead property unless the surviving spouse remarries, sells, or otherwise disposes of the original homestead property. HB 165 gives the Department of Revenue emergency rulemaking authority to administer the bill's provisions. (Chapman)

Taxes on the Rental of Real Property (Monitor)

HB 817 (Partington) seeks to repeal the transaction taxes on the rental of commercial properties. The bill also provides for exemptions on tangible personal property for educational institutions performing qualified production (motion picture) services. (Chapman)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 134 (Rodriguez) and **HB 6021** (Bankson) – Sales Tax Exemption of Bullion

SB 266 (Harrell) and **HB 199** (Porras) – Tax Exemption of Vertical Takeoff and Landing Aircraft

HB 6019 (Conerly) – State Estate Tax

HB 745 (Porras) – Tax Exemption on Sales of Indigenous Arts and Crafts

SB 698 (Osgood) – Timely Filing of Tax Returns

HB 825 (Steele) – Exemption of Assets

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HOUSING

Adaptive Reuse of Land (Oppose)

HB 409 (Caruso) creates a statewide advisory body, the Adaptive Reuse Public-Private Partnership Council (Council), to review and approve adaptive reuse projects. The bill does not define “adaptive reuse,” but the term is generally understood to refer to the process of repurposing existing buildings or sites in commercial, industrial, or mixed-use areas to create new housing. Once a project is approved by the Council, a municipality or county is mandated to either: 1) authorize multifamily or mixed-use residential development in any area zoned for commercial, industrial, or mixed-use; or 2) authorize hotels or motels to operate unencumbered as a transitional housing use.

Preemptions and Mandates for Adaptive Reuse Projects

The bill prohibits a municipality or county from requiring an adaptive reuse project to have a land use change, a deviation from standard zoning, or a comprehensive plan amendment. The local government is required to streamline the building permit and development order processes for adaptive reuse projects. It *requires* a local government to reduce minimum parking requirements for adaptive reuse projects in the manner specified in the bill (the required reduction depends on the nature of the existing site). The bill *permits* a local government to exempt from ad valorem taxation any affordable housing components of such projects, requires a local government to reduce impact fees by 1/3 for affordable housing components of

such projects, and requires a local government to exempt such projects from the levy of sales tax, tourism tax, or discretionary sales surtax. The bill specifies that an adaptive reuse project must comply with all applicable state and local laws and regulations.

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Ordinances for Transitional Housing Projects

The bill authorizes municipalities and counties to adopt ordinances for transitional housing to increase the supply of affordable housing. The bill does not define “transitional housing,” but the term appears to mean the conversion of hotel or motel rooms for use as rental housing. The bill specifies the eligibility requirements for transitional housing projects, including minimum size (50 rooms or more), physical characteristics, and required facilities and amenities for residents. The local government ordinance must: 1) designate the process for receiving and reviewing applications for transitional housing, including notices of determination of eligibility; 2) require the local government to verify eligibility and to notify applicants; 3) provide notice of deadlines to submit applications for transitional housing projects; and 4) require publication on the local government’s website a list of properties receiving the transitional housing designation.

Adaptive Reuse Public-Private Partnership Council

The bill creates the Council as a statewide advisory body to review, approve, and oversee the development of adaptive reuse projects. The 12-member Council shall be comprised of four members appointed by the state land planning agency, four members appointed from private sector industries, and four members appointed by “the local planning agency” (the bill does not specify which of Florida’s approximately 478 local planning agencies is designated to appoint the four members). The bill outlines procedures for the Council at least biannually to review and approve adaptive reuse project proposals. The Council must issue a report assessing the viability of a proposal and hold a public meeting in the community where the project is proposed. The Council is directed to monitor each project it has approved to ensure compliance with the project’s approved plans, the Florida

Building Code, and the Florida Fire Prevention Code and to perform project evaluations on a regular basis. Service on the Council is uncompensated, although the bill authorizes Council members to be compensated for per diem and travel expenses by their respective appointing entities. (O’Hara)

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Affordable Housing (Monitor)

SB 184 (Gaetz) and **HB 247** (Conerly) require local governments to allow accessory dwelling units by-right in any area zoned for single-family residential use, except for areas designated as planned unit developments or master planned communities. The bills do not change current law requirements that a building permit application for an accessory dwelling unit must include an attestation from the applicant that the unit will be rented at an affordable rate to low- or moderate-income persons. The bills prohibit a local government from requiring any increase in parking requirements for accessory dwelling units. The bills also authorize local governments to provide density bonus incentives to any landowner who voluntarily donates real property to the local government for the purpose of providing housing that is affordable for military families receiving the basic allowance for housing. In addition, the bills require the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to establish a model program for use in counties selected by the Corporation. The model program shall use mezzanine financing to encourage local housing authorities to stimulate the supply of affordable housing for owner occupancy. SB 184 was amended in committee to prohibit local governments from requiring that the owner of a parcel with an ADU reside on the property and to require the ADU to be assessed separately for ad valorem tax purposes if the primary residence is homesteaded property. The amendments to SB 184 also direct the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to develop a report on the use of mezzanine financing by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and to evaluate the potential of tiny homes in meeting the need for affordable housing. (O'Hara)

Affordable Housing and Supportive Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (Monitor)

SB 1004 (Rodriguez) establishes various tax exemptions, tax credits, and other incentives and programs relating to housing and services for persons with developmental disabilities. The bill exempts from property taxes the portions of a property that provide housing to persons with developmental disabilities, and it requires local governments to waive non-school impact fees associated with units

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that provide housing for such persons. The bill creates a process for obtaining refunds from taxes imposed pursuant to Chapter 112 for building materials used in residential units for such persons and it provides tax credits for eligible businesses that employ such persons. It directs the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) to prioritize funding under the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program for the development of rental housing for such persons and directs FHFC to establish loan guarantees for qualified developers that construct housing for such persons. The bill directs the Department of Children and Families, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Education, and the Department of Transportation to provide funding and support services to such persons. (O'Hara)

Conversion of Hotels into Residential Housing (Monitor)

HB 685 (Alvarez, J.) and **SB 1036** (Rodriguez) create section 220.1851, Florida Statutes, to establish a program to provide corporate tax credits to be awarded by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to eligible projects that convert hotels into residential housing. (O'Hara)

Housing (Oppose)

HB 923 (Lopez, V.) revises current laws relating to the various ad valorem tax exemptions for projects providing affordable housing. The bill substantially revises sections 196.1978 and 196.1979, Florida Statutes, which establish five property tax exemptions available to certain affordable housing developments.

Revisions to s. 196.1978, Florida Statutes:

The bill creates definitions for "financial beneficiary" and "multifamily project" such that a "multifamily project" consisting of different parcels may be included in a single ad valorem exemption application. Revisions to specific exemptions within this section are as follows:

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Property Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Entities (s. 196.1978(1)):

- The bill expands eligibility for this exemption to “property owned entirely by a governmental entity.” It also provides that all improvements used to provide qualifying housing on exempt property owned by a nonprofit or a governmental entity are also exempt from taxation.

Multifamily Project Property Tax Exemption for Recorded Agreement with Florida Housing Finance Corp. (FHFC) (s. 196.1978(2)):

- The bill amends the current law multifamily project property tax exemption for owners with a recorded agreement with FHFC. It removes the requirement that qualifying multifamily projects must contain more than 70 affordable units. Instead, the bill requires only that such projects must contain at least one affordable unit, or, for an adaptive reuse project (conversion of non-residential property into residential), at least 20% of the project’s residential units must be affordable. The exemption is applied to those portions of the property that are dedicated to providing the affordable housing.

Newly Constructed Multifamily Project Property Tax Exemption (s. 196.1978(3)):

- The bill revises the current law definitions of “improvement to real property” and “newly constructed” and adds a new definition for “substantial rehabilitation” and “substantially completed.” It maintains the requirement that the exemption is to be applied to the affordable housing components of the property. It removes the requirement that an eligible multifamily project contain more than 70% of affordable units. Instead, it requires that an eligible multifamily project contain at least one affordable unit, or, for an adaptive reuse project, at least 20% of the project’s residential units must be affordable.
- Current law provides two tiers of property tax exemptions in this subsection: 1) a 75% exemption for affordable units that serve households between 80-120%

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AMI; and 2) a 100% exemption for affordable units that serve households below 80% AMI. The bill adds a third tier: a 75% exemption for all affordable units within a qualified development approved pursuant to the Live Local Act administrative approval processes established in ss. 125.01055 and 166.04151, Florida Statutes.

- The bill further provides that a unit remains eligible for the exemption under specified conditions relating to a change in tenant income. It includes requirements for property appraisers when calculating the value of the exemption, including the inclusion of the proportionate share of the residential common areas attributable to each unit. It revises requirements for property owners to receive a certification notice to obtain the exemption from the FHFC. It allows a property owner that receives an exemption to add units or remove units from the list or to increase or decrease the number of units for which an exemption is sought in any subsequent taxable year, so long as the project continues to meet the minimum number of units dedicated to affordable housing. The bill directs the property appraiser to issue a verification letter that a property qualifies for the exemption and provides that a verification letter is prima facie evidence the property is eligible for the exemption.

County and Municipal "Opt Out" (s. 196.1978(3)(o)):

- The bill revises provisions of current law that authorize a county or municipal taxing authority to opt out of this property tax exemption. It provides the opt-out may be exercised by ordinance only if the three previous years of annual housing reports published by the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies demonstrate the number of affordable and available units in the area or region is greater than the number of renter households in the area or region for the category entitled "0-120 percent AMI."
- A project administratively approved under sections 125.01055(7)(e) and 166.04151(7)(e) of the Live Local Act before the adoption or renewal of an opt-

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out ordinance remains eligible to receive the exemption for each year it applies for and is granted the exemption.

- The bill requires a local government, prior to adopting an opt-out ordinance, to assess the jurisdiction's current and 5-year projected need for affordable housing.
- The bill requires local governments to notify the FHFC when they adopt or renew an opt-out ordinance. It directs the FHFC to report the status of local opt-out ordinances annually to the Governor and Legislature. The bill creates a cause of action for the owner of a multifamily project who would otherwise qualify for the ad valorem exemption and who is adversely affected by an opt-out ordinance adopted in violation of applicable statutory requirements. It authorizes a prevailing plaintiff to recover fees and costs not to exceed \$100,000.

99-Year Affordability Property Tax Exemption for FHFC-Funded Properties (s. 196.1978(4)):

- Current law provides a 100% exemption from ad valorem taxes for multifamily properties that contain more than 70 units affordable to households below 80% AMI, where the property is subject to a recorded agreement with the FHFC as a condition of receiving FHFC funding to keep the property affordable to households below 120% AMI for 99 years. The bill removes the requirement that an eligible property contain more than 70 affordable units. Instead, it requires that an eligible property contain at least one affordable unit, or, for an adaptive reuse project, at least 20% of the project's residential units must be affordable.

County and Municipal Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption (s. 196.1979):

- The bill includes adaptive reuse projects within the scope of this optional county and municipal affordable housing property tax exemption.

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- In addition, the bill specifies that developments approved pursuant to sections 125.01055 and 166.04151 of the Live Local Act may abate up to 20% of the development's ad valorem property tax for a period of 10 years by paying an amount equal to 20% of the total amount of the ad valorem taxes to be abated at the time a building permit is issued for the development. It directs the FHFC to adopt rules establishing standards for monitoring and compliance of a property owner that receives an ad valorem tax exemption and prohibits local governments from imposing any compliance monitoring requirements more stringent than the standards adopted by the corporation.

Local Government Infrastructure Surtax:

The bill includes within the definition of "infrastructure" any expenditure to construct or rehabilitate housing that is affordable for a period of 30 years.

Florida Housing Revitalization Act:

The bill creates section 220.197, Florida Statutes, establishing the Florida Housing Revitalization Act to award tax credits for the rehabilitation and restoration of a certified historic structure that has been approved by the National Park Service to receive the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit, and which will be used exclusively to provide affordable or workforce housing for at least five years.

Mobile Homes and Manufactured Homes:

The bill amends section 420.50871, Florida Statutes, relating to allocation of funds for the FHFC. Current law directs FHFC to allocate 70% of certain funds to finance projects that address urban infill. The bill includes the development or redevelopment of certain mobile home parks and manufactured home communities within the meaning of the term "urban infill." (O'Hara)

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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 unit 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)

Local Government Approval of Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemptions (Monitor)

HB 617 (Lopez, J.) revises subsection 196.1978(4), Florida Statutes, which relates to eligibility for the 99-year affordability exemption for Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC)–funded multifamily properties. This subsection provides a property tax exemption (100% for the affordable units) for multifamily properties with more than 70 affordable units and is subject to a recorded land use restriction agreement with FHFC to keep the property affordable for 99 years. In addition to this existing requirement, the bill also authorizes the exemption if the property has been approved to receive the exemption from the local government and is subject to a land use restriction agreement that requires the property to be affordable for a minimum of 30 years and is recorded in the public records of the county where the project is located. The bill requires a local government that approves this exemption to submit an annual report to the Department of Revenue, and it requires local property appraisers’ offices to conduct annual compliance reviews to confirm eligibility. (O’Hara)

Local Housing Assistance Plans (Monitor)

HB 701 (Stark) expands the list of persons eligible to receive assistance under a local housing assistance plan to include persons who own mobile homes in mobile home

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parks and authorizes local housing assistance plans to allocate funds for rental assistance to such persons. The bill directs counties and SHIP-eligible municipalities to include in their local housing assistance plans the provision of funds for lot rental assistance to persons who own mobile homes in mobile home parks and revises the criteria for awards made to eligible sponsors or persons to include mobile home lot rental assistance and the construction, rehabilitation, or repair of mobile homes. The bill prohibits counties and SHIP-eligible cities from discriminating between types of housing when awarding funds from the local housing distribution pursuant to section 420.9075, Florida Statutes. (O'Hara)

Mental Health Support Residences (Monitor)

SB 610 (Gruters) amends current law relating to group homes for persons with mental health issues and certified recovery residences. It provides that a single and two-family dwelling does not have a change of occupancy as defined in the Florida Building Code and may not be reclassified for purposes of enforcing the Florida Fire Prevention Code solely due to the dwelling's use as or conversion to a certified recovery residence or a residence owned by a charitable organization and used for housing no more than six adults suffering from mental health issues. (O'Hara)

Real Property and Land Use and Development (Oppose)

HB 943 (Lopez, V.) substantially revises current law relating to the Live Local Act and to local government comprehensive plans and land development regulations.

Live Local Act Modifications to Section 166.04151, Florida Statutes

Affordable Housing Projects on Land Owned by Religious Institutions:

The bill adds a new paragraph (b) to subsection 166.04151(6) that *requires* a municipality to approve the development of affordable housing if 1) the property is owned by a religious institution; 2) 40% of the units in the development will be affordable for at least 30 years; and 3) the property is not within 500 feet of a military

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installation or an airport. The municipality may not otherwise apply comprehensive plan provisions, land use or zoning regulations to the property.

Impact Fees:

The bill requires local governments to exempt or waive 20% of the impact fees associated with the portion of a Live Local Act project that is affordable housing.

Modifications to Section 166.04151(7) – Qualifying Live Local Act Developments:

- The bill defines “Allowable Use,” “Commercial Use,” “Industrial Use,” and “Planned Unit Development” for purposes of this subsection.
- It specifies that a municipality must authorize multifamily and mixed-use residential as allowable uses on or in:
 - 1) Any site owned by the municipality, a school district, or a religious institution,
 - 2) Any area zoned for commercial, industrial, mixed-use, or planned unit development,
 - 3) Any zoning district not zoned solely for use as single-family or duplex use;if at least 40% of the units will be affordable for 30 years. In addition, a municipality must allow the inclusion of any adjacent parcel of land as part of the multifamily development, regardless of the land use designation of the adjacent parcel.
- The bill specifies a municipality may not require the development to obtain an amendment to a development of regional impact, a development order, or a restrictive covenant.
- It defines an “area zoned for mixed-use” as any area that includes both residential and non-residential uses, regardless of whether such uses are permitted as principal, conditional, ancillary, special, unusual, accessory,

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planned unit development, or planned development. This has the effect of allows a Live Local Act project to be located in ANY zoning category that authorizes even an ancillary or conditional minor commercial and residential use – which will include residential preservation, conservation, institutional/government, and agricultural districts.

- Units that have received any inclusionary zoning or linkage fee incentives qualify as Live Local Act projects under this subsection if the units satisfy the requirements of section 420.0004 and local regulations.
- The bill prohibits a municipality from taking action that directly or has the effect of:
 - Restricting the density of a Live Local Act project below the highest density allowed on or after July 2023;
 - Restricting the maximum lot size of a Live Local Act project below the highest maximum lot size allowed on or after July 2023;
 - Restricting the maximum lot coverage of a Live Local Act project below 70%;
 - Restricting the floor-area ratio of a Live Local Act project below 150% of the highest floor-area ratio allowed on or after July 2023;
 - restricting the height below the highest height allowed on or after July 2023.
- It revises processes for administrative approval of Live Local projects to prohibit any public hearings or reviews of such projects by quasi-judicial bodies. It requires administrative approval of the removal or demolition of any existing structures on the development site.

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- It prohibits municipalities from imposing moratoria or zoning-in-progress on a proposed Live Local Act project for which the municipality has approved a preliminary site plan.
- It requires municipalities to post on their websites the zoning map and regulations in place as of July 2023.
- The bill removes current law provisions that direct municipalities to consider waiving parking requirements for projects located within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a transit stop. Instead, the bill directs municipalities to reduce parking requirements by 20% for Live Local Act projects and by 100% for projects less than 20,000 square feet, regardless of the project's local or its proximity to a transit stop.
- It deletes the current law requirement that a Live Local Act project must comply with applicable state and local laws and regulations.
- It requires municipalities to approve building permit plan review for Live Local Act projects within 60 days and to prioritize the review of these projects over other development projects.
- The bill authorizes the prevailing party to a challenge under subsection 166.04151(7) to recover attorney fees and costs.
- It preempts any decision or action taken by a municipality after July 2023 that either directly or indirectly:
 - Limits height, floor-area ratio, or density of a Live Local Act project;
 - Unreasonably delays the development or construction of a Live Local Act project;
 - Restricts the manner in which affordable units are accessed or developed, or which regulates the types of units in a project; or
 - Restricts or limits a Live Local Act project in any other way.

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- It expressly preempts the regulation of affordable housing to the state and supersedes any local ordinance or regulation on matters covered under subsection 166.04151(7).
 - If an action is filed against the local government on grounds of violating this express preemption, courts are directed to render a decision expeditiously.
 - The review or approval of a Live Local Act project may not be conditioned on the waiver or abandonment of any development right authorized by section 166.04151.
 - Beginning June 2026, the bill requires local governments to report annually to the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO):
 - All litigation under the Live Local Act
 - Actions the local government has taken on any proposed Live Local Act projects
 - Actions the local government has taken to deny or not accept a Live Local Act project
- DEO must provide an annual report of the aggregated information submitted by local governments to the Governor and Legislature.
- The bill prohibits municipalities from imposing a moratorium that would have the effect of delaying a project that would otherwise qualify for:
 - Any affordable housing ad valorem tax exemption
 - Any grant or other incentive for affordable housing under Chapter 420
 - Any abatement of development restrictions under section 166.04151(7).
 - It creates a cause of action for project owners adversely affected by a moratorium and authorizes the award of injunctive relief, attorney fees and costs, and damages to a prevailing plaintiff.

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- It provides that an owner of an administratively approved proposed development who has acted in reliance on such approval has a vested right to proceed with development.

Revisions to Chapter 163, Part II, Community Planning:

- The bill requires all urban infill development to be administratively approved, with no comprehensive plan amendment, rezoning, or variance required.
- It amends the definition of “compatibility” to state that all residential land use categories are compatible with each other.
- It redefines “urban service area” to include areas to which public services and facilities may be expanded by the local government or the private sector, as evidenced by an executed agreement with the local government, to provide urban services within the local government’s 20-year planning period.
- It provides that optional comprehensive plan elements may not contain policies that restrict the densities or intensities in the Future Land Use Element.
- It eliminates local government authority to use alternative data and analysis to support a comprehensive plan amendment.
- It requires approval of an increase in height or floor-area ratio in the land development regulations, to be accomplished through ordinance adoption with a simple majority vote.

Accessory Dwelling Units:

- The bill requires local governments to adopt ordinances allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in any area zoned for single-family residential use.
- It provides that a local government may not directly or indirectly increase the cost to build an ADU, including by:

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- Imposing restrictions on rental terms that do not apply to other housing uses within the same district
- Imposing parking requirements or design restrictions that do not apply to other housing uses within the same district
- Requiring discretionary approvals or other standards that do not generally apply to other housing uses in the same district
- It removes current law requirements that an ADU must be rented at an affordable rate.
- It requires local governments to submit an annual report to DEO, beginning October 2025, with information about the number of ADU applications and ADUs within the jurisdiction.
- It provides that a property owner may not be denied a homestead exemption solely because the property contains an ADU and allows the property assessment for the ADU to be separated from the homesteaded property.

Other:

- The bill amends section 760.26, Florida Statutes, relating to prohibited discrimination in land use decisions and permitting of development, to prohibit discrimination based on a development being affordable housing. It waives sovereign immunity for purposes of this section and provides that the amendments are remedial in nature and apply retroactively.
- It requires local government to make certain findings supported by competent substantial evidence before approving a resolution that designates a privately owned property as a historic landmark without the consent of the property owner.

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- It amends the optional property tax exemption in section 196.1979 to authorize the local government to define the minimum number of residential units an eligible project must have to qualify for the exemption and allows ADUs to qualify.
- It revises section 333.03, Florida Statutes, relating to development near airports.
- It amends section 420.50871, Florida Statutes, relating to authorized purposes for which funds provided to the State Housing Trust Fund may be spent. It expands funding eligibility to projects providing housing near Veterans Administration medical centers, outpatient clinics, and regional housing projects pursuant to a public-private partnership agreement with major employers.
- It creates section 702.13, Florida Statutes, to establish a process for expedited foreclosure proceedings for abandoned properties.
- It amends subsection 1001.43(12), Florida Statutes, relating to the use of surplus school board property for affordable housing. (O'Hara)

Resale-restricted Affordable Housing (Monitor)

SB 556 (Wright) creates section 193.0181 relating to “resale-restricted affordable housing for home ownership.” It defines “resale-restricted” as a legally enforceable deed restriction lasting 15 years or longer, which limits the property’s resale to an income-eligible buyer. Such property may include housing purchased with government assistance and housing purchased from a not-for-profit housing organization. The bill requires that resale-restricted affordable housing be assessed under section 193.011, Florida Statutes. It specifies that resale-restricted affordable housing is a land development regulation and a limitation on the highest and best use of the property. The bill also amends section 193.011, which specifies the factors

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property appraisers must consider in deriving a just valuation. It requires owners of resale-restricted affordable housing, as defined in the bill, Florida Statutes, to submit an application to the property appraiser that specifies the legal limitation on the property and includes an affidavit affirming the owner's obligation to abide by the resale restriction. (O'Hara)

Residential Land Use Development Regulations (Monitor)

HB 401 (Jacques) and **SB 634** (Martin) authorize municipalities and counties to zone or designate parcels for single-family residential use or "single-family hybrid housing use" (also known as "build-to-rent" subdivisions). The bills also authorize municipalities and counties to allow the use of land for single-family residential use while prohibiting the use of land for single-family hybrid housing use. The bills exempt a builder or developer from any land development regulations governing single-family residential use if the builder or developer owns the unoccupied home under permitting and construction. (O'Hara)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 43 (Edmonds) and **SB 362** (Osgood) – Reusable Tenant Screening Reports

SB 382 (Bernard) and **HB 365** (Tendrich) – Rent of Affordable Housing Dwelling Units

INSURANCE

Benefits for Firefighters Injured During Training Exercises (Monitor)

HB 749 (Sapp) expands health insurance benefits for firefighters and their families if they are injured during training exercises. The bill requires employers to fully cover health insurance premiums for disabled firefighters, their spouses, and dependent children. Coverage for spouses continues until remarriage, while dependent children remain covered until age 25. The bill also establishes penalties for fraudulent claims, including the forfeiture of benefits and reimbursement of paid benefits. Additionally, it clarifies that existing health insurance benefits remain in place unless otherwise

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specified. Finally, the bill ensures that death benefits remain valid for injuries sustained before July 1993 if the resulting death occurred after that date. (Cruz)

Law Enforcement Benefits (Monitor)

HB 751 (Sapp) and **SB 1160** (Leek) enhance insurance benefits for law enforcement and correctional officers injured in the line of duty or during official training exercises. The bills require employers to fully cover health insurance premiums for injured officers, including coverage for their spouses and dependent children. Coverage for spouses continues until remarriage, while coverage for children extends under certain conditions. The bills also clarify how insurance benefits are reduced when other sources provide coverage. Additionally, the bills establish penalties for fraudulent claims, including forfeiture of benefits and reimbursement requirements. Lastly, the bills expand eligibility to include injuries sustained during official training exercises, ensuring broader protection for officers. (Cruz)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 4003 (Skidmore) – Federal Catastrophe Risk Pool

HB 451 (Andrade) and **SB 554** (Gaetz) – Court Judgment Interest Rates and Insurance Reports and Practices

LAND USE AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Annexing State-owned Lands (Monitor)

HB 275 (Albert) and **SB 384** (Burton) require municipalities to notify the county's legislative delegation when proposing to annex state-owned land. The notification must be sent when the municipality first publishes the advertisement for the annexation ordinance's public hearing. (Cruz)

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Charter School Facilities (Oppose)

HB 569 (Kendall) grants local governments the authority to issue special variances for charter schools, ensuring they are treated the same as traditional public schools. If a local government imposes an education impact fee, the bill requires developers to offset their fees on a dollar-for-dollar basis through improvements or contributions to charter schools or school districts within three miles of their developments. Additionally, the bill preempts local governments from enforcing vehicular stacking regulations that limit traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times if such enforcement would restrict a school's enrollment capacity. The bill prohibits local governments from enforcing local building codes that are more stringent than the Florida Building Code and the Florida Fire Prevention Code if such regulation serves to limit the student capacity of a conversion charter school. Finally, the bill prohibits local governments from requiring proposed charter schools to obtain a special exemption or conditional use approval for land use, ensuring they are automatically considered an allowable use under local zoning laws. (Cruz)

Development Permits and Orders (Oppose)

HB 579 (Overdorf) and **SB 1080** (McClain) revise timeframes in sections 125.022 and 166.033, Florida Statutes, for counties and municipalities to process applications for approvals of development permits or development orders and require the local governments to issue certain refunds for failure to meet the timeframes. The bills require counties and municipalities to specify in writing the information that must be submitted in an application for zoning approval, rezoning approval, subdivision approval, certification, special exception, or variance. The bills require counties and municipalities to confirm receipt of an application for a development permit or order within five days. The bills do not otherwise change current law timeframes for review and action on a development permit or development order. The bills require the statutory timeframes to restart if an applicant makes a substantive change to an application, which is defined as a change of 15% or more in the proposed density, intensity, or square footage of a parcel. The bills prohibit a local government from

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limiting the number of quasi-judicial hearings or public hearings held each month if such limitation causes any delay considering an application for approval of a development permit or development order. The bills require counties and municipalities to issue refunds ranging from 10 to 100% of the application fee for failure to meet the existing statutory timeframes, for determining whether an application is complete or requires additional information, and for taking final action on an application. (O'Hara)

Education (Oppose)

HB 443 (Snyder) and **SB 822** (Rodriguez) make several changes to education policy, including provisions affecting municipalities. They authorize charter schools to increase enrollment capacity, provided it does not exceed the facility's maximum limit under certain conditions. The bills also require school districts to give priority to charter schools when disposing of surplus real property. Current law preempts local governments from restricting the conversion of certain facilities into charter schools, regardless of zoning prohibitions, and without requiring a special exception, rezoning, or land use change. These bills expand that preemption to include land owned by these specified facilities, not just existing buildings, further limiting local zoning authority over charter school sites. (Cruz)

Food Insecure Areas (Support)

HB 89 (Rayner, McFarland) addresses food insecurity by allowing local governments to modify land use regulations to support small-footprint grocery stores in designated areas. The bill enables local governments to alter land development regulations to permit the establishment of small-footprint grocery stores in food-insecure areas. The legislation grants local governments the authority to require mandatory reporting from these stores on specified matters. (Cruz)

Historic Cemeteries Program (Monitor)

SB 310 (Sharief) requires that if a historic African-American cemetery with excess vacant land sells or contracts to sell such land, the local government where the

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cemetery is located must approve a rezoning for the land. The rezoning must align with the most permissive land use category and zoning district permitted for land adjacent to the cemetery. (Cruz)

Land Use and Development Regulations (Oppose)

SB 1118 (McClain) and **HB 1209** (Steele) are broad growth management bills that reduces local government authority over land use and development regulations, favoring developers. A key concern for municipalities is the requirement for administrative approval of certain developments within agricultural enclaves, overriding any local prohibitions in the future land use map or comprehensive plan. This eliminates public meetings for approving these developments, which must be treated as conforming uses without further local approval.

The bills prohibit optional elements of local comprehensive plans from restricting development density or intensity. It also requires a supermajority vote for any comprehensive plan amendment that increases development restrictions. Additionally, it allows property owners to sue if a local government fails to adopt a requested comprehensive plan amendment within 180 days, requiring courts to determine compliance with state law without deferring to local government interpretation.

The bills further limit local authority over impact fees by narrowing the definition of "extraordinary circumstances." It strictly defines such circumstances as events beyond local control that prevent the intended use of impact fee funds, making it harder for cities to justify fee increases beyond statutory limits.

By January 1, 2026, local governments must establish minimum lot sizes allowing single-family, two-family, and townhome zoning at the maximum density permitted under the comprehensive plan. The bills also mandate administrative approval for

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residential infill development matching the average density of adjacent properties, bypassing rezoning, variances, and public hearings to gain approval. (Cruz)

Local Government Impact Fees (Oppose)

SB 482 (DiCeglie) and **HB 665** (Steele) prohibit local governments from requiring the installation of art or including art-related costs as a condition for processing or issuing development permits. Under current law, local governments cannot increase impact fees by more than 50% over a four-year period without conducting an "extraordinary circumstances" study to justify the higher rate. This bills define "extraordinary circumstances" and limits its application to situations where a certain population growth threshold is met. This definition will prohibit local governments from relying on other extraordinary circumstances, such as the unexpected rises in construction costs due to inflation. The bills require local governments exceeding phase-in limits for impact fee increases to conduct a demonstrated-need study outlining the benefiting projects and how they will benefit. (Cruz)

Restrictions on Redevelopment (Oppose)

SB 452 (Sharief) amends the Resiliency and Safe Structures Act, which was enacted last session to prevent local governments from restricting the demolition of certain historical or unsafe structures and to allow automatic approval for replacement structures. SB 452 further authorizes the redevelopment of replacement structures if the parcel is located on a barrier island where a building was demolished under the Act. This bill automatically rezones these parcels to the highest density previously allowed as of January 1, 2000, or any time thereafter, regardless of current land use policies, zoning designations, or conflicting comprehensive plan policies a city may have to the contrary. (Cruz)

Transportation Concurrency (Monitor)

HB 203 (Grow) and **SB 1074** (McClain) modify requirements for local government comprehensive plans in Florida, including transportation concurrency. Under current

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law, the capital improvements element of these plans must identify the facilities needed to achieve adopted levels of service within a five-year period. The bills add the phrase “or to maintain current levels of service” to this requirement. As a result, comprehensive plans will now need to identify the facilities necessary to meet adopted levels of service within five years or maintain existing service levels. (Cruz)

NATURAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC LAND

Brownfields (Support)

HB 733 (Anderson) and SB 736 (Truenow) make several revisions to Florida statutes related to brownfield rehabilitation. Of note to municipalities, the bills eliminate the requirement for property owners to provide information about institutional controls for mapping by local governments and remove such mapping responsibilities for local governments. The bills expand the eligibility for brownfield program participation, introduce specific provisions for brownfield areas proposed by specified persons, and detail criteria for local government designation responsibilities. The bills allow Superfund sites to enter the Florida Brownfields program prior to meeting certain conditions. The bills also address certain barriers to obtaining “No Further Action” status for brownfield sites, aiming to facilitate the rehabilitation of portions within larger contaminated areas. (Singer)

Farm Products (Monitor)

HB 211 (Cobb) and **SB 374** (Truenow) redefine “farm product” in Florida’s agricultural lands and practices statute to include both edible and nonedible plants and plant products, as well as any animals useful to humans and their derived products. Of interest to municipalities, the bills expand the existing preemption on bona fide farm operations classified as agricultural land to include the collection, storage, processing, and distribution of farm products, which governmental entities cannot limit if such activity is regulated through certain best management practices or specific statewide or federal regulatory bodies. (Singer)

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Nature-based Methods for Improving Coastal Resilience (Monitor)

HB 371 (Mooney) and SB 50 (Garcia) direct the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to adopt rules governing nature-based methods to improve coastal resilience. The bills require 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)

SB 284 (Rouson) repeals Florida Statute 163.035, which limits the ability of local governments establishing "customary use" ordinances to allow public access to private beaches. Customary use is a legal doctrine that can be used by local governments to create a public right to access beaches above the mean high-water line, even if such beach area is privately owned. A 2018 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 repeals this preemption, effectively eliminating the requirement for a judicial declaration before public access can be granted to private beach areas when local governments use the customary use doctrine. (Singer)

State Land Management (Support)

HB 209 (Snyder) and CS/SB 80 (Harrell) establish 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 bills require the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to hold public hearings when developing or updating land management plans. The bills also require DEP to publish notice and electronic copies of proposed plans within a specific timeframe before public hearings.

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Relevant to local governments, the bills mandate 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. CS/SB 80 was amended to specifically prohibit the installation or permission for installation of a lodging establishment at any state park. (Singer)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 492 (McClain) – Mitigation Banking

SB 56 (Garcia) – Geoengineering and Weather Modification Activities

HB 477 (Steele) – Weather Modification Activities

HB 481 (V. Lopez) and **SB 866** (Martin) – Anchoring Limitation Areas

HB 995 (Mooney) – Areas of Critical State Concern

OTHER

Construction Regulations (Oppose)

HB 683 (Griffitts) and **SB 712** (Grall) prohibit local governments from regulating synthetic turf installed in single-family residential areas one acre or less in size or enforcing any rules that prevent property owners from installing synthetic turf. The bills also make several changes to the procurement of construction services. The bills require action after receiving a price quote for a change order issued by the local government. The bills mandate that a local government has 30 days to approve or deny a price quote and send written notice of the decision. The bills state that any denial notice must specify the alleged deficiencies and the actions necessary to remedy them. The bills declare that failure to provide such information will result in the local government being held liable to the contractor for all overhead associated with the change order. The bills also state that a contract between a local governmental entity and a contractor may not alter the local government's duties under the section. The bills also prohibit a local government, when contracting for public works, from penalizing a bidder for performing a larger volume or rewarding a

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bidder for performing a smaller volume of construction work. The bills also prohibit a local enforcing agency for building-related activities from requiring any ancillary documentation between a permit applicant and its client as a requirement for the submission of an application or the issuance of a building permit. (Singer)

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Oppose)

HB 651 (Tuck) and **SB 700** (Truenow) are comprehensive legislation for several priorities of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). Of note to municipalities, the bills mandate electric utilities to submit to the county commission 10-year site plans for proposed power plants on agricultural lands at any time during the previous five years. Additionally, the bills require local governments to issue permits for electric vehicle charging stations based solely upon the standards established by Department rule, which include the time period for approving or denying applications.

The bills also expand the mosquito control statute to include municipal programs enabling enhanced administration, funding, and coordination between FDACS and local governments. The bills also define a “water quality additive” and prohibit its use in a public water system primarily for health-related purposes. The bills also restrict the assessment of civil fines when a municipality that impinged upon the state’s exclusive occupation of the field of regulation of firearms and ammunition resulted in a person or organization whose membership is adversely affected by local regulation. Civil fines can only be assessed in this situation if it is found the entity receives notice of their local regulation being alleged to be illegal 30 days before a suit is filed and does not remediate the issue within that time. The bills also adjust the statute language to permit a court to award the prevailing party and not exclusively the plaintiff. The bills create a new section in statute for educational facilities used for agricultural education. This contains a restriction on local governments adopting any ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy to prohibit, restrict, regulate, or otherwise limit any activities of public educational facilities and auxiliary facilities constructed by a board for agricultural education, for Future Farmers of America or 4-H activities,

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or the storage of any animals or equipment therein. The bills also specify the lands used for agricultural education or the aforementioned organizations shall be considered agricultural land. (Singer)

Display of Flags by Governmental Entities (Monitor)

HB 75 (Borrero) and **SB 100** (Fine) prohibit governmental entities from erecting or displaying flags representing political viewpoints or ideologies. The bills clarify that they do not limit the ability of private individuals to express private speech or exercise their First Amendment rights, nor the ability of governmental entities to display or erect flags that are authorized by general law. The bills further require that when a governmental entity is displaying the United States flag, the flag must be in a prominent position superior to other flags that are displayed. The bills permit active or retired members of the National Guard or armed forces to use reasonable force at any time to prevent the desecration, destruction, or removal of the United States flag or to replace the United States flag in a position of prominence unless ordered not to by law enforcement acting within the scope of their duties. (Wagoner)

Gambling (Monitor)

HB 953 (Barnaby) and **HB 1017** (Lopez, V.) are comprehensive bills dealing with gaming. Of concern to cities, the bills preempt local governments from enacting or enforcing ordinances or local rules relating to gaming, gambling, lotteries, or any other skill-based amusement game. (Wagoner)

Local Government Code Enforcement (Support)

HB 281 (Partington) and **SB 1104** (Rodriguez) propose several changes to Chapter 162, Florida Statutes, the Local Government Code Enforcement Act. The bills authorize cities and counties to designate a special magistrate to impose fines and penalties relating to state laws or local ordinances, land development regulations, or other technical codes adopted by a county or city. The bills define “Special Magistrate” as a member of the Florida Bar in good standing with a minimum of five years of experience as an attorney, appointed by a local government to oversee quasi-

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judicial proceedings. The bills update the enforcement procedures requiring a code inspector to schedule a hearing and issue a notice of violation which states the violation, provides correction instructions, and includes the date and time of the hearing. The bills update the subpoena powers of an enforcement board to allow designated persons to serve subpoenas provided the subpoena is hand-delivered with an affidavit of service that includes the date and time of service and the name of the person served. Additionally, the bills create a new statute allowing code inspectors to use body cameras and providing guidelines for their use and data storage. Lastly, the bill increases the criminal penalties for assault and battery on code inspectors. (Wagoner)

Municipal Job Engine Charter Schools (Monitor)

HB 123 (Andrade) and **SB 140** (Gaetz) are comprehensive bills aimed at making significant changes related to charter schools and school district property management. Of interest to municipalities, the bills will allow municipalities in school districts that have received below an "A" grade for five consecutive years to apply to establish a "job engine charter school." Municipal job engine charter schools will aim to attract job-producing businesses by offering specialized educational programs aligned with local economic needs. Municipalities granted a job engine charter must provide annual reports detailing investments to attract and maintain private-sector industries, ensuring the use of secure facilities, and accepting financial responsibility for the charter school's debts. The bills require school districts experiencing declining enrollment over a five-year period to dispose of surplus properties identified by the State Board of Education. This surplus property must be prioritized for affordable housing for teachers, first responders, and military personnel, for use as charter school facilities, which could include municipal-run charters, or for local government projects, such as recreational facilities. (Cruz)

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Regulation of Presidential Libraries (Monitor)

HB 69 (Andrade) and **SB 118** (Brodeur) preempt all regulation, maintenance, operations, and activities of presidential libraries to the state. The bills define a “presidential library” as an institution designated under the Presidential Libraries Act. (Wagoner)

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)

Smoking in Public Places (Support)

SB 226 (Gruters) creates a state prohibition on smoking or vaping in “public places”. “Public place” is defined as a place where the public has access, including but not limited to streets, sidewalks, public parks, beaches, and government buildings. The bill expands the definition of “smoking” to include marijuana products. However, the prohibition would not apply to smoking cigars in public places. (Wagoner)

Unlawful Demolition of Historical Buildings and Structures (Support)

HB 717 (Greco) and **SB 582** (Leek) authorize municipalities to impose an enhanced fine for the unauthorized demolition of a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a local historic landmark if the code enforcement board or special magistrate makes specific findings. Fines imposed may not exceed an amount that is 20% of the property appraiser’s evaluation of the fair market value. Under current law, the maximum fine for irreparable or irreversible damage to a historic structure is \$5,000 for cities with a population below 50,000, and for larger cities, it is capped at \$15,000. (Cruz)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 108 (Grall) and **HB 305** (Esposito) – Administrative Procedures

SB 448 (Burgess) – Administrative Procedure

HB 433 (Overdorf) – Administrative Procedures

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SB 354 (Gaetz) – Public Service Commission
HB 443 (Snyder) and **SB 822** (Rodriguez) – Charter Schools
SB 658 (Truenow) and **HB 893** (Overdorf) – Waiver or Release of Liens
SB 166 (Simon) – Administrative Efficiency in Public Schools
HB 967 (Holocomb) County Constitutional Officers
HB 303 (Fabricio) – Property Damage Caused by Limestone Mining Operations
SB 486 (Ávila) – Limestone Mining Operations
HB 535 (Johnson) and **SB 606** (Leek) – Public Lodging and Public Food Service Establishments

PERSONNEL AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

County Officers (Monitor)

SB 732 (Martin) proposes an update to the compensation methods and amounts for the following County Constitutional Officers: County Tax Collectors, Property Appraisers, Supervisors of Elections, Clerks of the Courts, and County Comptrollers. (Chapman)

Firefighter Benefits (Monitor)

SB 66 (Garcia) and **HB 87** (Casello) seek 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) and **SB 510** (Rouson) implement 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

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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 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)

Identification Cards for Public Works Employees (Monitor)

HB 341 (Woodson) seeks to have the Office of Program Policy Analysis study the feasibility of implementing a state-issued identification card for public works employees that would identify them as first responders. (Chapman)

Local Government Official Salaries (Monitor)

SB 272 (Burgess) and **HB 639** (Rizo) revise the base salary for certain county constitutional officers based on county population sizes for County Clerk of the Courts and Comptrollers, Supervisors of Elections, and Property Appraisers. (Chapman)

Peer Support for First Responders (Monitor)

SB 86 (Burgess) and **HB 421** (Maggard) would expand 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)

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Protections for Public Employees Who Use Medical Marijuana as Qualified Patients (Monitor)

HB 83 (Rosenwald) and **SB 142** (Polsky) seek to establish protections for public employees who use medical marijuana (and are qualified patients) from adverse personnel action. This bill also requires accommodations be made unless it presents an undue hardship to the employer. An employee who tests positive for marijuana use must be notified in writing by the employer and may explain or contest the positive result within five business days of the notice being given. Adverse personnel action includes discriminatory employment actions such as refusal to hire, suspension of current position, or demotion due to the patient's status for medical marijuana use. This bill allows public employers to take adverse personnel action if an employee's job performance is impaired by medical marijuana and provides exceptions. (Chapman)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 76 (Berman) – Paid Parental Leave

HB 307 (Mayfield) – Bonuses for Employees of Property Appraisers

SB 674 (Wright) – Bonuses for Employees of Tax Collectors and Property Appraisers

HB 541 (Chamberlin) and **SB 676** (Martin) – Minimum Wage Standards (Monitor)

HB 955 (Jacques) – Employment Eligibility

PUBLIC RECORDS

Public Records/Body Camera Recordings (Support)

SB 1106 (Rodriguez) creates a public records exemption for body camera recordings worn by code enforcement officers. (Wagoner)

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Public Records/County and City Administrators and Managers

HB 623 (Gerwig) and **SB 842** (Arrington) create a public records exemption of the personal information of current county and city administrative officials and their spouses and children. (Wagoner)

Public Records/Municipal Clerks and Staff (Support)

HB 517 (Cassello) and **SB 840** (Rodriguez) create a public records exemption of the personal information of municipal clerks, staff, and their spouses and children. (Wagoner)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 671 (Campbell) and **SB 798** (Rouson) – Electronic Payment of Public Records Fees

PUBLIC SAFETY

Cold Case Murders (Monitor)

SB 694 (Osgood) addresses cold case murders by establishing a process for reviewing and reinvestigating such cases. The bill mandates that law enforcement agencies review cold cases upon receiving a written application from a designated person and outlines the criteria for conducting a full reinvestigation. The bill requires law enforcement agencies to develop a written application for cold case reviews and mandate training for employees on the procedures and requirements outlined in the bill. The bill also requires law enforcement agencies to report all relevant data quarterly to the Global Forensic and Justice Center at Florida International University. The bill directs the Center to establish a case tracking system and a searchable public website. (Wagoner)

False Reporting (Support)

SB 726 (Ingoglia) strengthens accountability for the misuse of 911 and false reports to law enforcement by imposing financial liability for investigation and prosecution

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costs on individuals who misuse the emergency communication system. The bill mandates individuals who file false reports to pay restitution if the false reports cause injury or property damage. (Wagoner)

Public Nuisances (Support)

SB 1022 (Wright) allows counties or municipalities to adopt ordinances supplementing state laws on public nuisances. The bill enables local governments to recover costs including reasonable attorney fees from public nuisance investigations and hearings. The bill grants local authorities the power to maintain jurisdiction over premises declared as nuisances for one year. The bill provides that when certain activities are declared a public nuisance, a county or a city may impose a fine exceeding \$15,000. (Wagoner)

Recovery Residences (Oppose)

HB 1163 (Owen) and **SB 954** (Gruters) update requirements for recovery residences and their administration. Specifically, the bills require counties and cities to allow the establishment of a recovery residence in all districts zoned for multi-family use without any additional requirements. The bills provide that a Level IV recovery residence may be denied if the proposed location of the recovery residence is adjacent to a single-family residential development with at least 25 homes. Lastly, the bill requires cities and counties to reduce any local parking requirements by 50% for any recovery residence located within a quarter of a mile of a transit stop accessible from the residence. (Wagoner)

Victims of Domestic Violence and Dating Violence (Oppose)

HB 19 (Hinson) and **SB 240** (Berman) create 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 bills include a provision that preempts local governments from enacting or enforcing regulations that conflict with the creation and implementation of the HAVEN Act. The bills specify that any

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local laws, rules, or regulations related to matters covered by the HAVEN Act, such as the operation of the dynamic website and related victim services, are superseded by this state law. (Wagoner)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 65 (Hunschofsky) and **SB 252** (Polsky) – Sale, Transfer, and Storage of Firearms

SB 88 (Wright) and **HB 221** (Gentry) – Utility Terrain Vehicles

HB 113 (Chamberlin) and **SB 468** (Collins) – Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer

SB 164 (Rodriguez) – Vessel Accountability

HB 175 (Baker) and **SB 234** (Leek) – Criminal Offenses Against Law Enforcement Officers and Other Personnel

SB 188 (Berman) – Possession or Use of a Firearm on a Sensitive Location

SB 210 (Harrell) – Animal Cremation

SB 214 (Polsky) and **HB 259** (Gerwig) – Special Observances

SB 245 (Baker) – Immigration Enforcement Assistance Agreements

SB 268 (Jones) and **SB 789** (Valdes) – Public Records/Public Officers

HB 317 (Fabricio) and **SB 516** (Collins) – Complaints Against Law Enforcement and Correctional Officers

HB 413 (Gossett-Seidman) and **SB 568** (Rodriguez) – Swimming Safety

SB 500 (Avila) and **HB 711** (Borrero) – Spectrum Alert

HB 598 (Collins) – Enhanced Firearms Training Facilities

SB 692 (Osgood) – The Swimming Lesson Voucher Program

SB 929 (Booth) – Firefighter Health and Safety

SB 1042 (Martin) – Interfering with an Officer's Means of Protection or Communication

RESILIENCY

Other Bills of Interest

HB 143 (Barnaby) and **SB 62** (Rodriguez) – Resilient Buildings

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RETIREMENT/PENSIONS ISSUES

Cost-of-living Adjustment of Retirement Benefits (Monitor)

HB 945 (Blanco) proposes to adjust the calculation of cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for retirees in the Florida Retirement System (FRS). Provisions are made for persons to receive a 2% minimum COLA if they retire on or before July 1, 2025. A new methodology is also included for persons who have never received a COLA, as well as those retirees who previously have received a COLA. (Chapman)

REVENUES AND BUDGETING

Unrated Bonds (Monitor)

HB 669 (Gossett-Seidman) amends local government investment policies to not prohibit a minimum bond rating for bonds when considering financing options. (Chapman)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 173 (Brackett) – Interest on Trust Accounts Program Interest Rates

SB 388 (Rodriguez) – Trust Funds for Wildlife Management

SB 590 (Leek) and **HB 529** (Anderson) – State Board of Administration

SB 550 (Gruters) and **HB 487** (Barnaby) – Investments of Public Funds in Bitcoin

SOLID WASTE

Auxiliary Containers, Wrappings, and Disposable Plastic Bags (Support)

HB 6023 (Bartleman) and **SB 836** (Smith, C.) repeal the state preemption on local regulation of auxiliary containers, wrapping, or disposable plastic bags. (Singer)

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Comprehensive Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan (Support)

HB 295 (Casello) and **SB 200** (Berman) mandate the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to develop a comprehensive waste reduction and recycling plan by July 1, 2026. Of interest to municipalities, the bills require the Department to include a three-year plan to implement strategies providing recycling assistance to local governments. (Singer)

Municipal Solid Waste-to-Energy Program (Monitor)

SB 962 (Davis) makes several changes to the Municipal Solid Waste-to-Energy Program, including transferring oversight of the program from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Beginning on July 1, 2025, the bill mandates that DEP perform air quality and particulate matter measurements before providing financial assistance grant funding. Beginning on July 1, 2026, the bill mandates that DEP conduct an environmental justice evaluation process before providing incentive grant funding. (Singer)

Regulation of Auxiliary Containers (Oppose)

HB 565 (Blanco) expands the existing preemption to expressly preempt the regulation of auxiliary containers (reusable or single-use bags, cans, cups, bottles, or other packaging) and deletes a current law provision that requires the Department of Environmental Protection to review and update its 2010 report on retail bags and auxiliary containers. (Singer)

Storage and Disposal of Prescription Drugs and Sharps (Monitor)

HB 283 (Grow) and **SB 668** (Burgess) mandate that the Department of Health and Department of Environmental Protection partner to study the safe collection and proper disposal of sharps used for self-administering prescription drugs at home. Of interest to municipalities, the bills authorize the departments to work or contract with local governments that wish to participate in the study. (Singer)

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Waste Facilities (Oppose)

SB 946 (Rodriguez) prohibits local governments from permitting the following facility types to be located within two miles of the Everglades Protection Area, Everglades Construction Project, or specific water storage/conveyance structures: solid waste, municipal solid waste-to-energy, pyrolysis, solid waste disposal, and solid waste management facilities, as well as any incinerator. The bill preempts the permitting of such to the state, expressly superseding any local government regulation on these matters. (Singer)

Waste Incineration (Monitor)

SB 1008 (Avila) prohibits local governments from issuing a construction permit for a new waste-to-energy facility or a solid waste disposal facility using an ash-producing incinerator if the proposed location is sited within a one-half-mile radius of any residential property, commercial property, or school. (Singer)

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Other Bills of Interest

SB 7002 (Senate Environment and Natural Resources) – Water Management Districts
HB 973 (Overdorf) and **SB 986** (Truenow) – Special Districts

STORMWATER

Sanitary and Storm Water System Standards (Oppose)

HB 739 (Grow) requires all sanitation and stormwater systems, including infrastructure like lateral and sewer pipes, to adhere to the state Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, specifically the sections on "Pipe Culverts" and "Pipe Liner." The bill also mandates that final inspections for such infrastructure be conducted by a licensed engineer, a

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general contractor, or an independent third party. The bill clarifies that the standards prescribed superseded all existing and local standards in municipalities. (Singer)

Stormwater Management Systems (Oppose)

SB 810 (Burgess) mandates annual inspection of known stormwater works under normal and customary control of the municipality by June 1 of each year, beginning in 2026. The bill directs the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to create a standardized form that a local official who completes such inspection must complete and sign before submitting to DEM. (Singer)

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Other Bills of Interest

SB 344 (Rodriguez) – Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991

TORT LIABILITY

Suits Against the Government (Oppose)

HB 301 (McFarland) increases the statutory limits on liability for tort claims against the state and its agencies and subdivisions (which include cities). The current statutory limits for claims are \$200,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident. The bill raises these limits to \$1 million per person and \$3 million per incident for claims accruing between October 1, 2025, and October 1, 2030. After October 1, 2030, these limits will increase to \$1.1 million and \$3.2 million, respectively. The bill prohibits an insurance policy from conditioning the payout of a claim on the passage of a claims bill. The legislation allows a subdivision of the state to settle a claim above the statutory limits without the need for a claims bill, even if the payout exceeds insurance policy limits. The bill narrows the statute of limitation on negligence claims

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against government entities from four years to two years and the required pre-suit notice from three years to 18 months. (Cruz)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 48 (Garcia) – Judicial Sales Procedures

HB 213 (Gossett-Seidman) and **SB 322** (Rodriguez) – Unlawful Actions Concerning Real Property

SB 734 (Yarborough) – Actions for Recovery of Damages for Wrongful Death

TRANSPORTATION

Department of Transportation (Monitor)

HB 567 (McFarland) and **SB 462** (DiCeglie) are comprehensive bills addressing the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Notably for municipalities, the bills establish a new monthly distribution of six cents per kWh of electricity used at public electric vehicle charging stations to the State Transportation Trust Fund. This provision will be initially implemented in October 2025 and is set to end in June 2030. This section of the bill is supported by the Florida League of Cities as part of our 2025 Legislative Platform.

The bills also update the process for utility facility relocation within a right-of-way. It mandates that underground utilities placed, replaced, or relocated must be electronically detectable using FDOT-approved techniques. Additionally, utility owners will be financially responsible for:

- Failing to remove or refusing to remove or relocate a utility in a timely manner
- Any damage caused to existing infrastructure
- Roadway failures resulting from their utility facilities

The bills require permits for new placements to be conditioned on the payment of these costs.

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The bills define “as-built plans” to include all modifications made during construction and require them to document an agreed-upon depth. Utility owners must submit as-built plans with specific details within 20 business days after project completion. Reimbursement for any costs will be contingent upon submission.

The bills address facility relocation for federal interstate projects, requiring FDOT to determine whether reimbursement is in the public’s best interest and necessary to expedite construction. The bills allow reimbursement of up to 50% of relocation costs for municipally-owned utility facilities and 100% for those in a Rural Area of Opportunity after deducting any increase in facility value and salvage value. The bills also set procedures for coordinating FDOT-funded projects that cannot be completed within 10 years. Utility owners must submit existing and proposed plans within 30 to 120 days of receiving preliminary FDOT plans. Failure to comply may result in penalties, including withholding payments, permit denials, or exclusion from relocation work. However, extensions are available for emergencies or uncontrollable delays. If the utility owner fails to initiate work after a final 10-day notice, FDOT may seek injunctive relief. The bills also establish mediation boards to resolve disputes and outlines repayment timelines for damages owed to FDOT. (Singer)

Operating Motor Vehicles at Slow Speeds (Support)

HB 241 (Cross) and **SB 350** (DiCeglie) create an exception to state law, allowing local ordinances to require drivers to reduce their speed on flooded or inundated streets to minimize wakes and waves that could further damage nearby homes. The exception is also those operating a boat or any other conveyance. (Singer)

Personal Mobility Device Battery Safety Standards (Monitor)

HB 291 (Blanco) and **SB 410** (Rodriguez) establish mandatory battery safety standards for personal mobility devices. Of interest to municipalities, the bills instruct the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to coordinate with local governments to ensure compliance, including imposing fines and seizing non-compliant personal mobility devices. (Singer)

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Traffic Infraction Enforcement (Support)

SB 812 (Calatayud) defines a "railroad traffic infraction detector" as a system that detects vehicle movements at railroad crossings and captures photographic or video evidence. The bill allows counties and municipalities to install these detectors with proper signage on roadways adjacent to at-grade railroad crossings with the owner's permission, after enacting an ordinance authorizing its placement after considering safety risk assessments. The bill also allows the Florida Department of Transportation to install these when authorized by the local government having jurisdiction over or maintenance responsibility for the state road, street, or highway.

The bill provides procedures for issuing, disputing, and dismissing traffic citations related to detected infractions, including the provision of evidence to vehicle owners and the process for submitting an affidavit to contest citations.

The bill specifies the penalty amounts for violations and the distribution formula for collected funds. Distributions must be made weekly and are as follows: 60% shall be remitted to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for deposit into the General Revenue Fund, 30% shall be remitted to DOR for deposit into the Department of Transportation for Florida Operation Lifesaver, and 10% shall be distributed to the municipality in which the violation occurred. (Singer)

Utility Relocation (Monitor)

HB 703 (Robinson, W.) and **SB 818** (McClain) revise a utility owner's responsibilities after receiving written notice that the authority has found a utility placed upon, under, over, or within the rights-of-way limits of any public road or publicly owned rail corridor to be unreasonably interfering with the convenient, safe, or continuous use, or the maintenance, improvement, extension, or expansion of such public road or publicly owned rail corridor.

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The bills require a utility owner to provide a relocation schedule within 30 days of receiving such notice and to initiate the necessary work within 60 days. The bills will also require (rather than allow) utility owners to perform relocation work necessitated by a federally funded highway or rail project and will require the State to fund it. The bills make other currently allowable funding mechanisms required. If a utility was installed solely to serve the authority, or relocated to enhance vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian safety, then the authority must pay for its relocation. (Singer)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 339 (Abbott) and SB 320 (Gaetz) – Licensure Requirements for Surveyors and Mappers

SB 830 (Rodriguez) – Lost or Abandoned Property

UTILITIES

Municipal Water and Sewer Utility Rates (Monitor)

HB 11 (Robinson, F.) and **SB 202** (Jones) require 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)

Residential Utility Disconnections (Oppose)

SB 330 (Berman) and **HB 419** (Tendrich) prohibit an electric utility, a public utility, or a water utility from disconnecting service to residential customers for nonpayment of bills or fees if the forecasted heat index is at or above 90 degrees or at or below 32 degrees within 48 hours after the scheduled disconnection, or a state of emergency is declared for an extreme weather event or public health emergency 24 hours before or after the scheduled disconnection, until 24 hours after the state of emergency is lifted. The bills require such utilities to waive reconnection fees and late

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fees for customers attempting to reestablish service if disconnected for nonpayment if the heat index is at or above 90 degrees or at or below 32 degrees on the day of disconnection. The bills prohibit a utility from disconnecting service to any residential customer for nonpayment of bills or fees on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, state holiday, or any day immediately preceding a state holiday. In addition, the bills prohibit utilities from recovering from customers any fee or expense incurred in complying with the bills' requirements. The bills require utilities to provide residential customers with a copy of the utility's disconnection policy when a new account is established or when any disconnection for nonpayment is scheduled and to publish a copy of the policy on the utility's website. Utilities are required to publish alerts informing residential customers of the suspension of disconnection services due to a forecasted heat index above 90 degrees, below 32 degrees, or an extreme weather event. The bills specify that notices must be in English and Spanish and any other language spoken by more than 2% of the utility's customers and require the notices to contain information about payment plans and government energy assistance programs. It requires utilities to deliver notice of nonpayment of bills or fees to residential customers after each missed payment and 10 days. It specifies the contents of the notice of nonpayment and prohibits disconnection until an account is at least 60 days past due. The bills impose liability for actual and consequential damages, attorney fees, and court costs on a utility for violations of its requirements. (O'Hara)

Service Lateral Assessment and Rehabilitation (Oppose)

SB 1208 (Truenow) requires all utility systems to establish and maintain a comprehensive condition assessment program for sanitary sewer lateral lines under their jurisdiction. The purpose of the program is to mitigate the potential for inflow and infiltration that cause sanitary sewer overflows. The bill requires every service lateral within the utility system to be inspected using CCTV lateral launch camera systems every seven years. The bill requires each utility system to establish and maintain a lateral monolithic repair program. After inspection, each lateral line must be given a pipeline severity score. Lines exceeding a specified score must be flagged

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for immediate consideration under the repair program. The utility must execute timely rehabilitation of flagged lines using technologies specified in the bill. Rehabilitation of flagged lines must be completed within 12 months from the date issues are discovered. Utilities that fail to comply with these requirements are subject to enforcement and penalties from the Department of Environmental Protection. The bill provides no source of funding for utilities to implement the requirements, but it authorizes the state to establish incentives, grants, or matching funds, and it authorizes any funds allocated for environmental preservation or protection of water quality to be applied to the lateral line assessment and rehabilitation programs. (O'Hara)

WATER QUALITY/WASTEWATER

Advanced Wastewater Treatment (Support)

HB 861 (Cross) and **SB 978** (Berman) direct the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to collaborate with water management districts and wastewater facilities to submit a comprehensive report to the Legislature and Governor by December 31, 2025, detailing the condition, capacity, treatment levels, pollutant discharge, and environmental impact of sewage disposal facilities with a permitted capacity exceeding one million gallons per day. The report must include details on facility age, wastewater volume, pollutant concentrations, disposal methods, flood risk, and past spills to help prioritize upgrades and mitigation efforts.

The bills also direct DEP to submit a second report by December 31, 2026, establishing a priority ranking system for upgrading all sewage disposal facilities to advanced waste treatment by 2036. The report must evaluate projects based on environmental benefits, including water quality, algal blooms, fish and wildlife impacts, and spill risks. It must also assess potential pollutant reductions, necessary additional projects, cost-effectiveness, funding availability, and project readiness.

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The bills also require DEP to submit a progress report by June 30, 2027, detailing the status of sewage facility upgrades identified in the priority ranking report. The report must list facilities required to upgrade to advanced wastewater treatment, provide preliminary cost estimates, outline projected timelines for construction and completion, and specify the expected start date for upgraded facility operations. (Singer)

Safe Waterways Act (Monitor)

HB 73 (Gossett-Seidman) and **SB 156** (Rodriguez) establish the Safe Waterways Act, requiring municipalities and counties to "immediately notify" the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) of any incidents affecting the quality of beach waters or public bathing places. Public boat docks, marinas, and piers will also be required to immediately notify the jurisdictional municipality or county of any such incidents that may affect the quality of beach waters. The bills also require DEP to "immediately notify" the municipality or county where the affected beach waters or public bathing places are located upon issuing a health advisory. The bills specify that municipalities and counties will be responsible for posting and maintaining signage around the beaches and public bathing places they own, in accordance with DEP specifications, which must be placed at access points during health advisories until water quality standards are restored. The bill further expands a current preemption, giving the state exclusive authority over health advisories related to bacteriological sampling of beach waters and public bathing places. The bill also transfers responsibilities for bacteriological sampling of beach waters and public bathing places from the Department of Health to the DEP. DEP must adopt and enforce rules and issue health advisories for beach waters and public bathing places when bacteriological water sampling results fail to meet health standards. (Singer)

Springs Restoration (Support)

HB 691 (Conerly) amends Florida statute regulating the reuse of reclaimed water to allow wastewater facilities with approved plans to request incorporation of reclaimed water projects into their strategies for Outstanding Florida Springs recovery or

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prevention. The bill requires the Department of Environmental Protection to approve the request if certain conditions are met. (Singer)

WATER SUPPLY/POLICY

One-Water Approach Toward the State's Water Supply (Support)

HB 661 (Albert) is a resolution expressing the State of Florida's support of a one-water approach toward this state's water supply. This concept is supported by the Florida League of Cities' 2025 Legislative Platform. One-Water is an emerging initiative seeking to manage all water, whether from the tap, a stream, a storm, an aquifer, or a sewer, in a collaborative, integrated, inclusive, and holistic manner to support the future growth of this state's water supply and avoid any projected shortages. (Singer)

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Disability Presumptions for First Responders (Oppose)

SB 366 (Rodriguez) and **HB 269** (Black) seek to expand workers' compensation benefits for first responders. Under current law, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, correctional probation officers, and firefighters who become disabled due to tuberculosis, heart disease, or hypertension are presumed to have contracted the condition in the line of duty, making them eligible for workers' compensation. A recent ruling by the First District Court of Appeal determined that a thoracic aortic aneurysm does not qualify as "heart disease" under this presumption. In response, these bills expand the definition of "heart disease" to include most heart abnormalities, explicitly covering aneurysms. Additionally, the bills broaden the definition of "law enforcement officer" to include part-time and auxiliary officers, extending these presumption benefits to a larger group of first responders. (Cruz)