



CAPITOL UPDATE

February 11, 2019

Health & Safety

Senate Committee Holds Panel on Distracted Driving

Senator Tom Lee (Chair – Infrastructure and Security Cmte.) held a panel discussion on distracted driving which included representatives from Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Police Chiefs Association, and the Florida Sheriff's Association. According to the presentation, Florida is ranked 48th for safety in the U.S. due to distracted driving.

Sen. Hooper, a retired firefighter, shared that passing a ban on the use of phones while driving has been an uphill battle for the last several sessions. However, the committee gave verbal support for Sen. Simpson's bill ([SB 76](#) – Use of Wireless Communications Devices While Driving) that would prohibit listening or talking on a wireless device while driving and change the enforcement of the law from a secondary offense to a primary.

SB 76 is anticipated to be heard in committee in the coming weeks. This item is one of the 2019 Health & Safety legislative policies adopted by FAC.

Updates on the Implementation of Medical Marijuana (SB 8-A)

On February 6, Courtney Coppola (Florida Department of Health's Medical Marijuana Director) presented to the House Health Quality Committee providing an update on the implementation of SB 8-A. Ms. Coppola's presentation included the history from 2014 to date, authorized/unauthorized uses, the implementation components, and rules and regulations per legislation.



Courtney Coppola, FDOH
Medical Marijuana Director

Senate Starts Carrying Out Florida's Vaping Ban

The Senate Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee heard SB 7012 by Senator Brandes. The bill as is implements s. 20, Article X, as amended by Amendment 9 (2018) that prohibits vaping in an enclosed indoor workplace. It also requires the proprietor responsible for the enclosed workplace to create and implement a policy outlining specific smoking and vaping prohibitions. After much debate and presentation from industry advocates, Sen. Brandes' bill favorably passed in committee.

FAC Contact:

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NEWS ARTICLES ON INDOOR VAPING

[Senate works on implementing Florida's vaping ban](#)

Finance, Tax & Administration

Permit Fee Bill Passes Senate Community Affairs Committee

Approved unanimously through the Senate Community Affairs Committee on February 5, [SB 142](#) (Permit Fee Transparency) would require counties to place building permit fee schedules on their websites and would require the development and posting of a “Building Permit and Inspection Utilization Report.” Current law only requires counties to post each type of building permit on its website. This bill would require that a schedule of fees for those permits also be posted. The report would also require the posting of information related to the costs and revenue associated with enforcing the Florida Building Code, as well as, certain benchmarks such as permit application submitted and inspections requested.

The next committee stop for [SB 142](#) is the Senate Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee. The House companion, [HB 127](#), is scheduled to be heard in House Business & Professions Subcommittee on Wednesday, February 13.

House Subcommittee Holds Panel on Telecommunication Law

On Wednesday February 5, the House Energy and Utilities Subcommittee received an overview of the history of telecommunications law from the telecommunications industry and the Public Service Commission. Panelists also touched on the consequences of telecommunications deregulation on Florida’s telecommunications industry and the perceived barriers to service expansion, which included cost of compliance with local government right-of-way ordinances and the communications services tax’s contribution to the consumers’ overall cost of telecommunications services.

Both chambers are expected to take up bills on communications services tax reform and changes to the existing regulations governing local government permitting of small cells in the right-of-way. [HB 693](#), Communications Services, relating to both the communications services tax and right-of-way regulation was filed on Thursday, February 7.

FAC adopted CST reform as one of its priorities this year, adopting a policy supporting reform that is revenue neutral, streamlines administration, and allows consumers to select services based on product-preference.

Gov. DeSantis Issues Executive Order 19-31

On Wednesday, January 30th, Governor DeSantis issued an executive order addressing workforce education and development. Executive Order 19-31, focuses primarily on the implementation of two goals:

1. Florida becoming the number 1 state in the nation in workforce education by 2030, and
2. Ensuring that Florida’s students are prepared for jobs of the future.

The order focuses on aligning market demands with the programming of the Career & Technical Education (CTE) Programs in the Department of Education. This includes seeking \$10 million in the FY 19-20 budget for apprenticeships and other industry specific opportunities for students.

To read more about Governor DeSantis' Executive Order, [click here](#).

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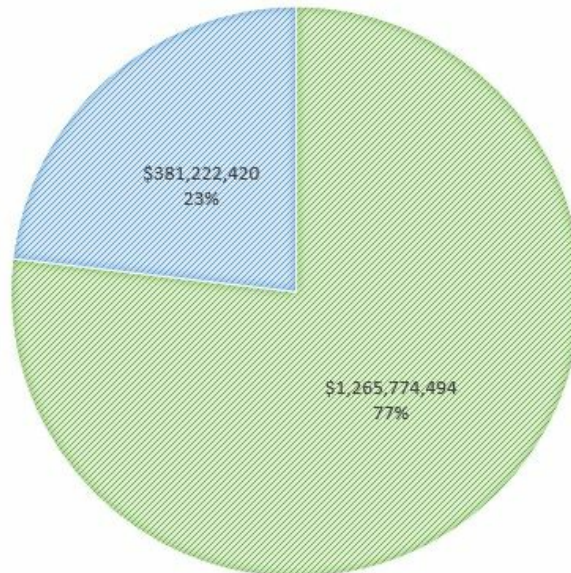
FAC Data Point

How much of the affordable housing trust funds have been swept?

After not having raided either the Local Government Housing Trust Fund or the State Housing Trust Fund for three years from 2005-06 to 2007-08, the Florida Legislature has consistently swept both affordable housing trust funds in every annual state budget since. From 2008-09 to the current State Fiscal Year, the amount in funds swept total \$1.6 Billion with \$1.2 Billion (or 77 percent) coming from the Local Government Housing Trust Fund.

CUMULATIVE SWEEPS 2008-09 TO 2018-2019

■ Local Government Housing Trust Fund ■ State Housing Trust Fund



In his first recommended budget to the state legislature, Governor Ron DeSantis proposed a break from this long-running practice of sweeping affordable housing trust funds. The Governor's recommended budget would appropriate a total of \$352 million out of these trust funds to support affordable housing—an increase of more than \$180 million compared to the current year funding and an amount nearly identical to the most recent sweep of the trust funds.

The Florida Association of Counties has long supported appropriating the full amount of dedicated revenues from the Local Government Housing Trust Fund and State Housing Trust Fund toward affordable housing and opposes the Legislature transferring these funds to other areas of the state budget.

Want to learn more? [Click here](#) for additional graphs and data regarding the affordable housing sweeps.

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