

Tribal Chickee Structures Protected from Local Regulation

HB 929 – Rep. Nan Cobb (SB 1020 – Sen. Keith Truenow)

General Bill Summary

HB 929 addresses the regulation of “chickees,” traditional open-sided structures with thatched roofs historically used by the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. The bill restricts the authority of counties and municipalities to regulate the construction of these structures under certain circumstances.

The bill prohibits a county or municipality from adopting or enforcing an ordinance, regulation, or policy that prevents a tribal member from constructing a chickee if certain conditions are met. Specifically, a chickee may be constructed in a side yard if it is at least 10 feet from a property line, and near another structure if it is at least 10 feet away from that structure.

Local governments are also prohibited from adopting regulations related to chickees that are more restrictive than applicable federal floodplain management regulations.

The bill revises the statutory definition of “chickee” for purposes of exemption from the Florida Building Code, allowing such structures to include features such as wooden decks, non-wood fasteners, and permitted electrical or plumbing components associated with the structure.

Additionally, the bill creates a criminal penalty for individuals who are not members of the tribes who construct chickees in an attempt to claim the statutory exemption, and it provides certain exemptions from the Florida Fire Prevention Code when specified spacing or fire-safety measures are present.

Potential County Impact

HB 929 creates a state preemption of local regulation related to the construction of chickees by members of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes. Counties would be prohibited from enforcing ordinances or development regulations that prevent or effectively prohibit construction of chickees when the bill’s spacing conditions are met.

This restriction may limit a county’s authority to apply local zoning, setback, or structural regulations to these structures. Counties would also be unable to adopt regulations that exceed federal floodplain standards with respect to chickees, potentially reducing local flexibility in floodplain management policies.

The revised statutory definition of chickees may require counties to adjust how building officials interpret existing exemptions from the Florida Building Code. While the bill allows electrical and plumbing features, those elements may still require building permits and inspections, which counties are responsible for administering.

The new criminal penalty provision may also require coordination with local code enforcement and law enforcement agencies when individuals attempt to improperly claim the exemption.

Overall, the bill represents a narrow but clear limitation on county regulatory authority related to these traditional tribal structures.

Effective Date

July 1, 2026.

Primary Statutory References

- s. 125.489, F.S.
- s. 166.04845, F.S.
- s. 553.73, F.S.
- s. 633.202, F.S.