

Farmland Surrounded by Growth Could Move Faster Into Development Review

SB 686 – Sen. Stan McClain (HB 691 – Rep. Adam Botana)

General Bill Summary

As of March 12, 2026, SB 686 had passed both chambers, and its House companion, HB 691, was laid on the table in favor of the Senate bill. The bill rewrites Florida’s process for developing certain “agricultural enclaves,” meaning qualifying unincorporated agricultural land mostly surrounded by development. Instead of relying primarily on a comprehensive plan amendment pathway, the bill creates a certification process through the local government. If certified, the owner or authorized agent may submit development plans that must be treated as a conforming use even if the local comprehensive plan, future land use designation, or zoning would otherwise conflict. The bill also broadens the definition of agricultural enclave to cover additional parcel configurations, including some lands near interstate highways or within certain rural study areas, limits eligibility to counties with populations of 1.75 million or less, and provides that the new enclave provisions expire January 1, 2028, after which the statutory text reverts unless otherwise amended.

Potential County Impact

For counties, SB 686 could reduce local discretion over land use decisions for qualifying agricultural enclave properties. Counties would have to process certification applications on a statutory timeline, hold a public hearing, issue written findings if denying certification, and in some cases certify the property automatically if deadlines are not met. Once certified, counties must accept development plans consistent with adjacent uses and may not impose requirements more burdensome than those applied to comparable applications. Counties also must treat enclaves adjacent to an urban service district as though they are inside that district and must enter into a written approval schedule within 30 business days; that process cannot exceed 180 days or require another quasi-judicial hearing. The bill may create administrative pressure on planning, legal, and infrastructure review staff and could increase litigation risk if denials are challenged by certiorari. While the Senate staff analysis states no formal government-sector fiscal impact, counties could still face workload, infrastructure coordination, and growth-management implications, especially where enclave development proceeds without a conventional comprehensive plan amendment.

Effective Date

July 1, 2026. The bill also provides that its amendments relating to agricultural enclaves expire January 1, 2028, and the affected statutory text reverts to the version in effect on June 30, 2026, except for nondependent amendments enacted by other laws.

Primary Statutory References

- s. 163.3162, F.S.
- s. 163.3164, F.S.