

**TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY ISSUES:
FROM THE LEGISLATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

COMMUTER RAIL

- ✘ Legislation for Commuter Rail passed in the House but failed to make it out of the Senate
- ✘ The state is still in discussions with CSX to move forward with the commuter rail plans for Central Florida, and the possibility of working with Amtrak is also being explored.
- ✘ Meeting the transportation needs of Floridians will remain a top priority in future years, and we will surely be revisiting this issue during Legislative Session next spring.

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION BILL

- ✘ With the depletion of funds in the federal Highway Trust Fund, it clearly cannot be 'business as usual'. Florida, in cooperation with other states, is looking at not only the donor state issue (Florida receives less than 87 cents for every dollar it sends in federal gas tax) but also in providing states with the maximum flexibility in building their transportation programs.
- ✘ Also, with a funding source that is based on consumption of gasoline and the prices as they are today, we need acknowledgement at the national level that the current revenue stream is no longer reliable and the planning must begin now to develop a system that will be more reliable.
- ✘ Senate appropriators have included an \$8 billion bailout of the national Highway Trust Fund in its version of the Federal FY 2009 USDOT Appropriations Act. If passed, this would avert the 1/3 reduction in federal apportionments in Federal FY 2009 which would otherwise be necessary without this bailout. This will likely keep the Trust Fund solvent through Federal FY 2010, sufficient time for Congress to pass a new multi-year transportation act.

FUNDING SHORTFALL

- ✘ Unfortunately, all funding shortfalls at the federal and state level tend to ‘trickle down’ to local governments, depending on the programs that are most important to them.
- ✘ Larger counties have to review their priorities to determine what can be funded and what cannot. Fortunately, the Central Florida area with Metroplan Orlando has a unified voice that collectively evaluates the priorities for the region and makes the necessary adjustments.
- ✘ A regional view of a communities’ transportation needs also brings about innovative solutions to address those needs. Many times a region will get together and see if they can afford, with local government funds, to advance a project on the state system with the department committing to pay them back in a future year. The economic development brought about by the construction of the transportation improvement typically spurs additional growth.

OFFSHORE DRILLING

- ✘ President Bush has lifted the Executive Order banning the Department of Interior from issuing new leases in America's Outer Continental Shelf.
- ✘ The President's action by itself will not allow new leases. This issue is now in the hands of the Congress. New federal legislation would have to be passed to lift the Congressional Moratorium.

ENERGY: HB 7135

- ✘ Final passage of the House Energy package, HB 7135, is the culmination of a two year effort to establish a sensible energy policy for Florida that ensures energy remains affordable and reliable while also addressing environmental concerns.
- ✘ Discussions creating HB 7135 focused on questions about the science of climate change, the costs of various policies, Florida's limited ability to address the causes of climate change by acting alone, and the probability that the U.S. Congress will enact a national cap and trade program to restrict greenhouse gas emissions from electric utilities and others.

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- ✘ Creates a 9-member Florida Energy and Climate Commission appointed by the Governor, Commissioner of Agriculture, and Chief Financial Officer.
- ✘ Creates the Florida Energy Systems Consortium with participation from all state universities. We need to utilize the academic experience we have in this state and we are proud of what Florida universities have to offer in conducting energy research and establishing a curriculum for our future scientists.

ENERGY: HB 7135

- ✘ Creates a Renewable Fuel Standard requiring that beginning on December 31, 2010, all gasoline sold in Florida contain, at a minimum, 10 percent ethanol, by volume. The bill provides exceptions to the requirement, including waiving the requirement if blended fuel is more expensive than unblended gasoline.
- ✘ Adopts energy standards for the construction of new state, county, municipal, school district, state university, community college, state court, and water management district buildings.

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✘ Energy Related Funding:

- + \$50.0 million - Florida Energy Systems Consortium
 - ✘ \$15 million - University of Florida
 - ✘ \$8.75 million - Florida State University
 - ✘ \$8.75 million - University of South Florida
 - ✘ \$8.75 million - University of Central Florida
 - ✘ \$8.75 million - Florida Atlantic University
- + \$ 8.5 million - Florida Gulf Coast University Solar Field Installation
- + \$ 8.0 million - Bioenergy Projects for Renewable Technology
- + \$ 7.0 million - Renewable Energy and Energy Efficient Technologies Grants Program
- + \$ 5.0 million - Solar Energy System Incentives Program