

# **Legislative Update – Week 3**

Beginning Wednesday morning, it was nonstop chasing water/growth bills. Even today, there are 14 Shell bills (they were just place holders for the real thing), that are in Senate committees. I thought the legislators were not going to focus on growth issues?!?

Every single bill we've been tracking this week passed their committees. Here is a brief synopsis:

## **HB 1109 – Water Supply**

Postponed from Monday's agenda, this was heard Wednesday morning. Rep. Williams presented her bill as a restructuring the water supply statutes under one new Part and that none of the language changed within the bill, just renumbering. (This is true, as my review reflected, for the most part.)

C4RG's testimony focused on the language that was NOT in the bill, ie., the legislative intent and policy protecting the environment and public health and safety. The only remaining section that she put in her bill focused on supplying water for present and future growth. Two of the three pronged approach that Sen. Dockery had worked so hard to balance was eliminated. Therefore, the omission of these language creates a new legislative intent and policy with regard to our water supply. Most assuredly, this would make it much easier for utilities, water management districts, water authorities, ie. Tampa Bay Water, and others to create and move water. This also makes it easier to distribute water statewide. As you know, South Florida needs the water Northwest Florida has in abundance. Legislation has been around for years trying to accomplish this.

Although the bill passed the Military & Local Affairs Committee, the committee members made sure this bill was reviewed by staff and legal counsel. C4RG and Hillsborough County were the only two entities that testified with concerns. The rest, which were mostly water management districts, supported this. More to come...

## **HB 1509 – Economic Development**

This bill also passed its committee. Buried toward the end of this bill is language regarding delegation of duties from the water management districts, but it comes with stiff penalties. Our EPC is working on this as well. This language is starting to show up in many bills.

In the **Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee in the House**, three bills were heard:

## **HB 1445 – Fertilizer Ordinances**

This bill ties the hands of local governments from ordinances that are stricter than the pathetic state model. It has two more stops at committees before it can go to the floor for vote. We'll keep you advised.

## **PCB ANR 10-09 – Consumptive Use Permits**

This bill was a proposed Committee Bill from this committee. Part of this bill prohibits any large water consumer ie., farms, from getting their permits reduced for any reason. I believe this is in direct reaction to the sinkholes that appeared this winter due to farms having to cover their crops. There are many restrictive measures in this bill, and we are working with our local governments and agencies.

You can judge most bills very easily... when development/utility interests are contrary to environmental/local government interests.

Dev – for  
Enviro – against

Bill passed. It will now get a number...

## **PCB ANR 10-10 – Water Conservation**

This was also a proposed committee bill trusting a utility to have and implement its own conservation plan without having to comply with a water management's conservation plan. Smell a rat? Utilities love this one.

It passed and will get a number...

## **PCB ANR 10-11 – Stormwater**

Again, a proposed committee bill directed at looking at nutrients and water quality and come up with new stormwater systems.

Dev – against  
Enviro – for

It passed – we actually have a good bill (it's not great) that might actually help clean up our waters.

It will get a number soon.

In the **Senate's Community Affairs Committee**, three bills were heard:

### **SB 1126 – Permitting**

This bill moves some powers from Dept. of Environmental Protection to the Governor; expedites permitting for biofuel and renewable energy projects; and affects local government challenges to water permitting.

This is the second committee this bill has passed. It has two more.

### **SB 2452 – Growth Management**

This bill grandfather's in any developments, rezoning, extensions that were contained in SB 360 last year's growth bill disaster. Although Hillsborough County planners have said this shouldn't affect us, we're watching it just the same. There is a House companion, **HB 773**. This is the first of two committees this bill is scheduled for hearings. We need to come alive with emails at the next stop...

### **SB 2074 – Agriculture**

This bill prohibits a county from regulating a bona fide farm under certain circumstances; creates agricultural act awareness form that homeowners must sign if they move next to a farm.

Passed - it has three more committees assigned to it. From past experience, if a bill is scheduled for more than 3 committees, leadership really doesn't want it to move. We still watch.

On Thursday, only one HUGE bill was heard regarding some growth issues:

### **SB 1752 – Economic Development**

Yes, this bill is mostly about new jobs, including NASA focus, but there are three to four questionable sections have to do with water permitting that appears to be bogging this bill. The bad permitting parts mentioned in other bills are all part of this one. The price tag alone on this bill is all over the board: The Dems say \$187 million to the taxpayers and the Reps say \$70 million. The bill's sponsor, Sen. Gaetz, stated \$76 million. The question is where will this money come from? Schools? Health?

This bill passed with only one NO, and now it goes directly to the floor of the House for three readings and a final vote. At each reading additional amendments can be added. This is where "trains" gather steam (lots of amendments on all sorts of things good/bad). This will be interesting to watch. Again, we're working with local gov't reps on this bill.

I'll send separate review of the Senate shell bills.

Thanks, again for your participation in our democracy.

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