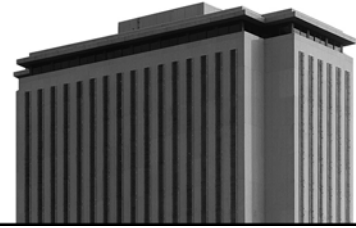




LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BRIEFS



Energy

When Governor Crist issued Executive Order 07-127 directing our state to become a leader in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, energy became an issue of interest for all Floridians. Both the House and Senate have now introduced their full energy packages, **SB 1544** (Saunders) and **HB 7135** (Mayfield/Kreegel). While the bills address a variety of energy matters the following paragraphs describe provisions of particular interest to municipalities.

The following concepts are unfunded mandates or preemptions of local government authority and are opposed by the Florida League of Cities, Inc:

- Ad Valorem tax exemption for improved real property upon which a renewable source energy device is installed. The exemption is in the amount of the cost of device, including installation, and can be applied for no more than 10 consecutive years.
- Mandated development of energy efficiency standards for newly constructed, renovation, or leased government buildings. Currently, this mandate is only contained in the House bill, 7135.
- Changes to definitions and procedures contained in the Power Plant Siting Act and the Transmission Line Site Act. These changes could potentially preempt local comprehensive planning and zoning regulations.

The following concepts are mandates that the bill is placing on the state government; however we continue to monitor them for amendments that would include municipalities within these requirements.

- Requirement that government entities hold conferences and meetings at hotels that are designated as “green lodging” facilities as designated by the Department of Environmental Protection.
- Implementation of vehicle maintenance schedules for government vehicles in order to improve fuel efficiency.
- Minimum fuel standards for government vehicles.
- Requirement that government vehicles operate on ethanol or biodiesel, if available, and a requirement that entities administering central fueling operations procure biofuels for fleet needs.
- Requirement for metropolitan planning organizations to minimize greenhouse gases while managing, implementing, and developing transportation systems. In addition, MPOs may be encouraged to consider strategies that integrate transportation and land

- use planning to provide for sustainable development and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The following concepts are included in both energy bills and are supported by the league.

- Enactment of the Florida Green Governments Grant Act to provide financial assistance to local governments for the purpose of developing programs that achieve “green” standards.
- Provisions authorizing the development of a net metering program in statute and rule. Net metering would allow utility customers to produce electricity with a renewable source energy device and sell any excess electricity back to their utility company.

Status: **HB 7135** (Mayfield/Kreegel) and **SB 1544** (Saunders) comprise the omnibus energy package for the 2008 session. During the week of April 14, SB 1544 was read twice on the Senate floor. The Senate will now wait for the House to proceed. HB 7135 was released from bill drafting the week of April 14 and is awaiting a reference from the Speaker’s office.

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