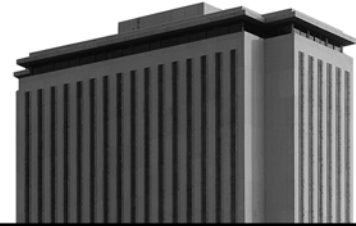




LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BRIEFS



Mobile Home Park Closure

The Florida League of Cities will support legislation that preserves and protects the property rights of mobile home owners. Legislation should address fair compensation, relocation and removal cost incurred by mobile home park residents in instances of park rezoning. However, such cost should not be the responsibility of local governments. Finally, legislation must provide procedures in statute by which local governments can address mobile home park rezoning based upon land development regulation standards.

Background:

Escalating property values, especially in Florida's urban coastal cities, have prompted an increasing number of mobile home park owners to close their parks and redevelop or sell the land for other uses. While the statewide impact of this land use trend is uncertain, its effect has been most directly felt by residents of older mobile home parks. These parks typically serve seniors and low-income individuals who have relatively few affordable housing alternatives.

Owners seeking to relocate their mobile homes following the closure of a park often find it difficult to move their homes to a new location. The reality is that mobile homes are designed to be permanently placed in one location and maintained there for the useful life of the unit. Moving a mobile home can a complex process and costs associated with moving a unit are substantial and vary widely. As well, the age and condition restrictions in effect at many parks prohibit the admission of certain mobile homes into those parks.

Past legislative attempts to address these problems have included unfunded mandates; requiring local governments to pay the relocation cost of mobile home owners resulting in rezoning decisions. Caught in a "catch 22", local governments and state agencies are prohibited from approving an application for rezoning or taking any official actions that result in the removal or relocation of homeowners from a mobile home park, unless it is first determined whether adequate mobile home parks or other suitable facilities exist for the displaced homeowners. Because the terms "adequate" and "suitable" are not defined in statute, this makes for inconsistent interpretation.

Finally, local governments have limited authority to deny rezoning requests when they are consistent with the local comprehensive plan and/or zoning ordinances. Denying an application may bring litigation. So there remains the need to legislatively balance protections for mobile home owners with the rights of park owners. However, relocation cost should not be the responsibility of local governments.

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