2016

Florida League of Cities

Legislative Action Agenda

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.

The Florida League of Cities is the champion of Home Rule in Florida. Florida's constitution empowers citizens with the right of local self-government, or Home Rule. Cities are the embodiment of this right. Cities are formed by citizens and are governed by citizens. They administer the local affairs of the community for the special benefit of the city's residents. The form of government and level of services a city provides are fundamental expressions of Home Rule. Home Rule is why no two cities are alike. City residents take pride in this diversity and responsibility. Strong Home Rule powers ensure that government stays close to the people it serves. Intrusion on Home Rule from the state or federal government undermines the constitutional right of local citizens to govern themselves.

The Florida League of Cities opposes unfunded mandates from any level of government. An unfunded mandate is when one government forces another level of government to take some action that spends or reduces revenue, without providing any resources to offset the impact. Unfunded mandates are the antithesis of government transparency. Mandates conceal the connection between the taxes city residents pay and the services they receive. Unfunded mandates cause local city leaders to be held accountable for decisions made by others who live far away and who are not accountable for the fiscal impact on local taxpayers. The Florida Constitution prohibits unfunded mandates from state government except under certain conditions. This provision was added to the constitution in 1990 after Floridians became fed up with being forced to pay for state programs with local tax dollars. Yet, in spite of the clear preference of Florida's residents, unfunded mandates have continued to be passed onto cities by the Legislature.

2016 FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES LEGISLATIVE ACTION AGENDA

RELOCATION OF UTILITIES

CONTACT:
Megan Sirjane-Samples

The Florida League of Cities **OPPOSES** legislation that mandates local governments and their taxpayers bear the cost of relocating utility equipment when the equipment is located within a public utility easement or right of way and needs to be relocated for public purposes.

BACKGROUND

For more than 100 years, state law has provided local government with the authority to require non-government utilities to pay the costs associated with relocating their utility equipment out of public rights of way and public utility easements to accommodate public construction projects, such as road improvement projects and other non-transportation public projects. Public utility easements and public rights of way are controlled by local government and access is provided to utilities as a permissive use. Generally, a utility is required to pay the costs to relocate its equipment when relocation is in the public interest.

In many communities, a "public utility easement" is created by dedication in a land developer's plat for a new community, such as: "The owners of this property do hereby dedicate easements along each boundary of each home site for county drainage purposes and for public utilities." Typically, public utility easements do not exceed six to 10 feet in width and run alongside public rights of way in the case of roadways.

Like rights of way, courts have found that public utility easements are for the benefit of the public and, therefore, are not owned by utilities. Instead, such easements function as public property for the use of utilities. Thereby, developers create interests relating to particular (limited) property uses by third parties who then use the property to provide essential public services. Occasionally, utilities purchase these property interests, but often they do not, leaving local authorities with the burden of purchasing property for public easements and/or rights of way as part of roadway improvement projects.

If local governments are required to bear the cost of relocation, it would dramatically and negatively affect them by transferring the costs of utility relocations from the utility provider to local government taxpayers, instead of the actual users of the utilities. In many cases, the utility equipment to be relocated does not service the constituent taxpayers of that municipality or county, but services a neighboring local government.

The expense of relocating a utility's equipment in the public easement, or for non-transportation purposes within the right of way, will greatly increase the costs of completing transportation projects at a time when local governments continue to struggle with funding for such projects. Transportation projects are often the catalyst for economic development and the result of growth within a community, which benefit the utility in terms of an expanded customer base. ■

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

CONTACT:
Megan Sirjane-Samples

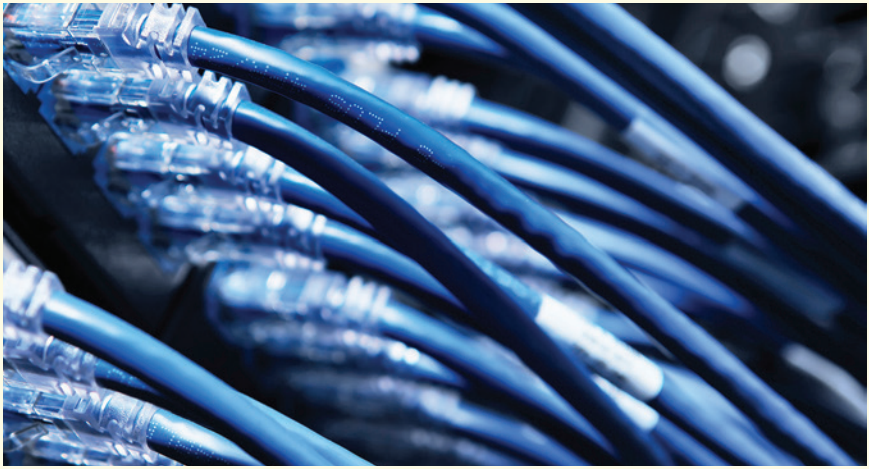
The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that provides opportunities for increased and alternative revenue sources for municipal transportation infrastructure projects.

BACKGROUND

Municipalities have limited revenue options for funding transportation projects. A major portion of transportation funding flows to municipalities through the county, state and federal governments. Much of that funding is generated through a tax on gasoline. Recent data has shown that gas tax revenues at both the state and federal levels have decreased dramatically, primarily due to an increase in the number of fuel efficient vehicles on the road. More fuel efficient vehicles means less gas is being purchased, resulting in lower gas tax revenues. As vehicles will only become more fuel efficient, gas tax revenue is forecasted to continue to decrease. To compound the problem, the federal gas tax was last increased in 1997, the state gas tax in 1943, the county gas tax in 1941 and the municipal gas tax in 1971. None of these taxes are indexed for inflation; therefore, the real rate of tax has remained static and actual revenues have declined.

In addition, municipalities lack options to increase revenue to fund local transportation projects. For example, charter counties may currently hold a referendum on whether to impose up to a 1 percent sales tax to fund transportation infrastructure projects. Also, Florida statutes allow each county to levy up to 12 additional cents per gallon of fuel. The proceeds of these "extra" fuel taxes are distributed by interlocal agreement or by a statutory formula that is not favorable to municipalities. Municipalities lack the authority to impose these fuel taxes. This can be problematic when there are disparities between the transportation needs of municipalities versus those of the more rural areas of the county at large. For example, a referendum was held in Hillsborough County to enact such a tax. The tax was defeated countywide; however, if the election results are broken down by municipality, a majority of the residents of Tampa voted to approve the tax. Extending such transportation revenue options to municipalities would allow greater flexibility to fund their unique transportation needs.

Transportation projects are often the catalyst for economic development and the result of growth within a community. As municipalities lack options to increase revenue and continue to struggle to fund local transportation projects, increased and alternative funding sources at the state level are a necessity. ■



PHOTO©THINKSTOCK.COM

LOCAL COMMUNICATION SERVICES TAX PROTECTION

CONTACT:
Amber Hughes

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that protects general revenues collected from the local communications services tax. These revenues are used to provide essential municipal services, such as public safety, and constructing and maintaining roads, bridges, public parks and open spaces. Maintaining a diversified revenue base strengthens the fiscal stability of local governments and improves their ability to serve all citizens and businesses.

BACKGROUND

In 2001, the Florida Legislature restructured taxes and fees on telecommunications, cable, direct-to-home satellite and related services under the Communication Services Simplifications Act. This act replaced and consolidated seven different state and local taxes and fees into a single tax that has two centrally administered parts, the state and the local communications services tax (CST). The local CST is one of the main sources of general revenue for municipalities, providing them with more than $400 million annually. These revenues may be used for any public purpose, including pledging the revenues to secure bonds.

The CST tax applies to telecommunications, video, direct-to-home satellite and related services, including voice, data, audio, video, or any other information or signals transmitted by any medium. The tax is imposed on retail sales of communications services that originate and terminate in the state, or originate or terminate in the state and are billed to an address within the state.

The Florida CST includes both a state tax and a gross receipts tax. Communications services, except direct-to-home satellite service, are subject to the state tax of 4.92 percent and the gross receipts tax of 2.52 percent. Direct-to-home satellite service is subject to the state tax of 9.07 percent and the gross receipts tax of 2.37 percent.

A county or municipality may authorize the levy of a local CST. The local tax rates vary depending on the type of local government entity. For municipalities that have not chosen to levy permit fees, the tax may be levied at a rate of up to 5.1 percent. For municipalities that have chosen to levy permit fees, the tax may be levied at a rate of up to 4.98 percent. These maximum rates do not supersede conversion or emergency rates authorized by statute that are in excess of these maximum rates. In addition to the local CST, any local option sales tax that a county or school board has levied is imposed as a local CST.

Over the past few years, legislation has passed that has eroded the tax base for the CST. There has been a movement to reduce the total tax rate, both on the state and local CST. In 2015, the Legislature passed HB 33A, reducing the state CST rate and the direct-to-home satellite rate by 1.73 percent. The law includes a "hold harmless" provision that protects local governments by modifying the revenue sharing distribution formulas to offset the negative recurring impact caused by the reduction in revenues shared with local governments. ■

LOCAL BUSINESS TAX PROTECTION

CONTACT:
Amber Hughes

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that protects general revenues collected from the local business tax and preserves the local authority to levy the tax.

BACKGROUND

Currently, a municipality may impose a local business tax for the privilege of engaging in or managing a business, profession or occupation within its jurisdiction. The amount of the tax and the occupations and businesses that the tax is imposed on are determined by the local government. Local business tax revenues collected by local governments are used to assist in the funding of services critical to business such as zoning, permitting, code enforcement, and police and fire services. Local governments may also use the business tax revenues to help fund economic development programs, presenting a direct benefit to businesses through the marketing of local areas. Many municipalities use the business tax as general revenue funds and have pledged these revenues to secure debt. Collections for municipal local business tax revenues are approximately $145 million annually.

PHOTO©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

A municipality that has not adopted a business tax ordinance or resolution may adopt such an ordinance. The tax rate structure and classifications must be reasonable and based upon the rate structure and classifications adopted by adjacent local governments that have implemented Section 205.0535,

Florida Statutes. Prior to October 1, 2008, any municipality that had adopted a local business tax after October 1, 1995, could reclassify businesses, professions, and occupations and establish new rate structures provided certain conditions were met. Since this time, counties and municipalities can no longer reclassify but can increase or decrease the rates of business taxes by up to 5 percent every other year. Any subsequent increase must be enacted by at least a majority plus one vote of the governing body. A municipality is not prohibited from decreasing or repealing any local business tax. State law exempts certain individuals from all or a portion of local business taxes. State law also regulates the issuance of local business tax receipts to certain individuals.

The revenues derived from the business tax imposed by county governments, exclusive of the costs of collection, are apportioned between the county's unincorporated area and the municipalities located within the county by a ratio derived by dividing the municipalities' respective populations by the county's total population. ■

VACATION RENTALS

CONTACT:
Casey Cook

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that repeals the state preemption of the regulation of vacation rental properties in order to allow local governments to regulate such properties to protect the health and welfare of residents, visitors and businesses.

BACKGROUND

In 2011, the Florida Legislature prohibited cities from regulating short-term vacation rentals. A short-term vacation rental is defined as a property that is rented more than three times a year for less than 30 days at a time. The legislation passed in 2011 included a provision that "grandfathered" any ordinance regulating vacation rentals prior to June 1, 2011. Since that time, a number of cities, both "grandfathered" cities and those that did not have an ordinance in place, have experienced problems with these properties due to the constant turnover and increased traffic to and from these homes, including increased noise complaints and limited parking. Many homes have also been converted to sleep large numbers of individuals, placing a strain on the neighborhood infrastructure.

The effect of the 2011 law is that two separate classes of cities were created respective to vacation rentals, those with Home Rule authority and those without.

In 2014, the Legislature passed SB 356, which diminished the preemption on vacation rentals. The law allows local governments to adopt ordinances specific to vacation rentals so that they can address some of the noise, parking, trash and life-safety issues created by the proliferation of vacation rentals in residential neighborhoods. Unfortunately, SB 356 left in place existing statutory language stating that cities cannot "prohibit" vacation rentals, or regulate the duration or frequency of the rental.

Those cities fortunate enough to have had an ordinance in place prior to the 2011 preemption are still allowed to regulate vacation rentals, but the question remains whether these ordinances will continue to be valid if amended. Some city attorneys believe that these ordinances are "frozen" and any future amendments would cause a loss of the "grandfather." The problem with this is twofold. First, with the rise of popular rental websites like Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) and AirBnB making it easier to advertise and rent these properties, the number of vacation rentals in Florida has exponentially increased in the last four years. Second, as a result of this enormous growth in the vacation rental market, the scope of the problem has changed and ordinances adopted before 2011 may no longer be effective.

It is important to note that many of Florida's larger cities (with a larger professional staff) fell into the grandfathered category. They have retained the ability to regulate these properties through zoning and may have duration and frequency requirements. Some cities may want to amend their ordinances to adjust to a changing problem. They are reluctant to do so out of fear of losing their existing ordinance and with it their Home Rule authority relating to vacation rentals. Recognizing that the ordinances on the books are no longer effective, cities want the ability to come up with solutions that work for their respective community, but because of the potential loss of the "grandfather," they are unable to do so. It is important to note that any potential amendments to existing ordinances would be vetted through numerous public hearings that allow neighboring homeowners, vacation rental owners, vacation rental managers, and local businesses to weigh in on proposed legislation.

Cities without vacation rental ordinances in place prior to June 1, 2011, have had their zoning authority stripped and are now seeing vacation rentals completely overtaking residential neighborhoods. Long-time residents are moving out as a result, and the residential character of traditional neighborhoods is slowly being stripped away.

The Florida League of Cities calls on the Legislature to continue the conversation on vacation rentals and fully restore Home Rule to Florida's cities. ■

PHOTO©THINKSTOCK.COM

PUBLIC RECORDS

CONTACT:
Casey Cook

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** public records reform to discourage or eliminate schemes designed to generate violations of public records laws as well as limit harassing or unreasonable public records requests.

BACKGROUND

Cities, as well as numerous other governmental entities, are required to comply with the public records laws in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes. While every city incurs some level of expenses in complying with public records requests, numerous cities have incurred extraordinary or unreasonable costs. The reasons for these extraordinary costs can vary, but include records requests clearly designed to be harassing in nature (either by the frequency of requests or the extent of any particular request); requests designed to generate a technical violation of the public records laws; and requests designed to do nothing more than serve as the basis of a lawsuit, typically with offers to the city to settle and pay attorney's fees and costs.

Several individuals and entities around the state have developed a "cottage industry" designed to produce technical violations of the public records laws. These individuals have a standard method of operation. They will frequently show up at a public office, or the office of a private entity providing services to

the public entity, and demand to inspect frequently remote documents (such as insurance coverage documents). The employees working in these offices may not be used to receiving public records requests, and are clearly not the "custodian of public records." (For cities, the custodian of public records is typically the city clerk.) In attempting to comply with the public records request, the staff members may technically violate the public records laws (e.g., asking the requestor for his or her name and contact number, asking the requestor to sign an entry log, stating that they believe the information requested is not subject to the public records laws, etc.). Typically, the next communication from the person making the public records request is service of a lawsuit alleging violations of the public records laws. Undoubtedly, these lawsuits are then followed by a request for settlement, demanding attorney's fees and costs.

Various individuals and entities have filed thousands of public records requests and hundreds of lawsuits. Recently, a judge in Duval County denied a request for attorney's fees in a public records lawsuit and called a plaintiff's actions "a baiting gesture meant to achieve personal financial gain; not a legitimate request for public records" and "nothing more than a scam."

Under Section 119.0701, Florida Statutes, private businesses that enter into contracts with public agencies to provide various services become subject to the public records laws. Many private businesses have also fallen victim to the scam identified above.

These schemes are designed to do nothing more than raid the public treasury at the expense of tax payers.

In 2015, legislation was filed to address public records laws when private entities enter into contracts to provide services to public agencies. The bills addressed notification concerns, training issues and the requirement to post contact information for the custodian of the public records in any building in which public records are sent, received, created, maintained and requested. However, the bills failed to pass the Legislature. ■

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

CONTACT:
David Cruz

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that provides municipalities with increased flexibility to enter into public-private partnership agreements pursuant to state law or by Home Rule authority.

BACKGROUND

Public-private partnerships are contractual agreements between public and private sector entities that allow for greater private sector participation in the delivery and financing of public infrastructure projects. Prior to 2013, cities relied on Home Rule powers to enter into public-private partnerships (P3s). As a result, Florida emerged as a leader in their use, and P3 projects such as design-build became commonplace. Cities are extremely supportive of the P3 concept as these creative partnerships are crucial to addressing Florida's vast infrastructure needs.

However, in 2013, a new law standardized the P3 process and created an extremely prescriptive framework that local governments must adhere to when procuring a P3. In standardizing the P3 process, the legislation pre-empted local governments from following their current P3 procurement procedures and eliminated the flexibility necessary to negotiate and contract with private entities in a manner that is most appropriate for that specific project. The flexibility to negotiate the terms of P3 contracts is paramount when considering the complexities of large-scale projects that often draw on various funding sources and involve teams of developers, investors and contractors.

The Florida League of Cities voiced concerns with various provisions of the law, including authorizing private entities to submit unsolicited P3 proposals; requiring duplicative notice to be provided to affected jurisdictions; requiring local governments to repay P3 debt on a priority basis before funding essential services; and infringing on local government authority to negotiate and contract the terms of a P3.

PHOTO©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

The 2013 law also established a P3 guidelines task force to create and develop recommendations for the creation and operation of P3s in Florida. The Florida League of Cities worked closely with the P3 Task Force, implementing recommendations that promoted local government flexibility in the procurement of P3 projects.

During the 2015 legislative session, legislation to implement a majority of the recommendations made by the P3 Task Force was filed. Provisions favorable to cities included increasing flexibility in contracting for P3s by allowing contracting timelines to be extended in certain situations and clarifying authority to local governments to require unsolicited bids to be accompanied with a fee to cover the costs of reviewing the proposal. The proposed legislation would have also made the P3 statute supplemental authority, allowing cities to rely on Home Rule authority to enter into P3 agreements or follow the process in Florida statutes. Despite receiving the favorable support of several committees, the bills failed to pass the Legislature. ■

PHOTO©THINKSTOCK.COM

IMPACT FEES

CONTACT:
David Cruz

The Florida League of Cities **OPPOSES** legislation that restricts a municipality's Home Rule authority to set impact fees or transportation concurrency.

BACKGROUND

Impact fees and transportation concurrency are mechanisms used by local governments to ensure that new developments pay for the infrastructure needs they generate.

An impact fee is based on the proportionate share of the cost of the public facilities needed to serve new development. Florida law requires that calculation of an impact fee be based on the most recent and localized data. In addition, a city imposing an impact fee must provide for an accounting and reporting of impact fee collections and expenditures.

Transportation concurrency is a state law that requires each local government in Florida to adopt a comprehensive plan and implement regulations

that require adequate basic services and facilities be provided at the same time as, or concurrent with, any new development. For example, one of these required types of services is transportation facilities. The law basically states that a local government cannot approve a new development unless it finds that there will be adequate transportation facilities to serve the traffic from that new development at the time of occupancy.

Impact fees and transportation concurrency are adopted by ordinance, which is a legislative decision of the city's governing body. Current law authorizes municipalities to waive the collection of impact fees. As a result, some cities have made the local decision to waive impact fees, hoping this will be a catalyst for economic development and foster growth. Other cities have examined their current infrastructure needs and concluded imposing impact fees or transportation concurrency is necessary to adequately fund the development or growth.

Developers have long argued that impact fees in Florida are excessive and unfair. Additionally, because the courts accord a high level of deference to the local governments' decision-making process, some developers feel that legal challenges to decisions regarding impact fees are almost impossible to win. In recent years, bills have been filed to limit or restrict a local government's ability to impose impact fees and transportation concurrency, or to make it easier for a developer to prevail in a legal challenge to an impact fee.

In 2015, legislation was filed prohibiting local governments from imposing impact fees and transportation concurrency on small businesses of 12 or fewer employees for commercial buildings less than 6,000 square feet. While this legislation did not ultimately pass, it is expected that similar legislation will be filed in 2016 attempting to limit or eliminate the ability of local governments to impose impact fees and transportation concurrency. ■

WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY

CONTACT:
Ryan Matthews

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that provides a recurring source of funding for local government programs and projects that protect water resources; improves water quality and quantity; mitigates pollution from onsite waste water systems; expands the use of alternative water resources, recognizing that reclaimed water is an asset paid for by utilities' rate payers; and requires all infrastructure users to pay the cost of operation and maintenance of such utilities.

BACKGROUND

Florida has historically dealt with multiple water challenges. Today, South Florida faces water quality problems in the form of massive water releases of nutrient enriched waters from Lake Okeechobee. Those releases, which are controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, pollute the estuaries and water systems that flow to the St. Lucie River in the east and to the Caloosahatchee River in the west. North Florida faces an impending disaster in its oyster industry due to increased water usage by neighboring states Alabama and Georgia. Meanwhile, all of Florida is struggling with how to efficiently conserve water and avoid devastation of the Floridan Aquifer.

The State of Florida must comply with federal drinking water standards, which are mandated by the Federal Clean Water Act. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "Clean water is vital for Florida. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus, or 'nutrient pollution,' is the primary cause of water quality impairment throughout the state and causes algae blooms – the thick, green muck that fouls clear water. Nutrient pollution threatens human health and the environment, hurts businesses, costs jobs, reduces property values and otherwise impacts the quality of life for all Floridians. Water quality standards help to protect and restore the quality of the nation's surface waters, consistent with the requirements of the Clean Water Act."

Local governments work in coordination with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), as well as the five water management districts (WMDs), to stay in compliance with and adhere to the Florida Water Resources Act of 1972 and a multitude of other programs.

In 2015, no comprehensive legislation dealing with water issues ultimately passed the Legislature, despite the session being deemed "the year of water," due to the acrimony between the two chambers related to possible Medicaid expansion. The Florida League of Cities will continue to seek comprehensive legislation dealing with water conservation, springs protection, septic tanks, reclaimed water, agricultural water practices, as well as water quality reform for Lake Okeechobee. ■

SEA LEVEL RISE

CONTACT:
Ryan Matthews

Recognizing the impacts sustained by cities statewide related to sea level rise, changing precipitation patterns and increasing storm severity, the Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that encourages vulnerability assessments, coordinates resources and supports the efforts of local governments to mitigate and adapt to these dynamic environmental conditions.

BACKGROUND

The Florida peninsula has the longest coastline in the contiguous United States at approximately 1,350 miles. This unique geography provides for a potentially alarming reality as it relates to sea level rise and an ever-changing climate pattern.

In 2010, the Florida Oceans and Coastal Council released a report titled Climate Change and Sea Level Rise in Florida: An Update of the Effects of Climate Change on Florida's Ocean & Coastal Resources. That report credits two main sources, or "processes," of sea level rise: the expansion of ocean water caused by increasing ocean temperature, and the addition of "new water" from melting reservoirs of ice.

Climate change is a much more divisive topic than sea level rise. Communities in Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm Beach counties are prone to seasonal high tides that lead to saltwater intrusion into downtown areas, sewer systems, canals, pools and more. The adaptation and mitigation of sea level rise is an issue that a large number of coastal municipalities will have to face in the future.

PHOTO©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

As an association, the Florida League of Cities is not focused on the causes of rising seas and damaging storm events. Our concern is the impact that rising tides, rising sea levels and similar events have on municipal governments. For example, there is now a weather event that causes the City of Miami Beach to flood during the annual super high tide, (known as the "King tide.")

The mitigation of sea level rise is needed, regardless of its genesis. Municipalities face multiple challenges associated with rising tides, such as zoning issues, saltwater intrusion, takings claims and their legal ramifications, coastal and inland flooding, and comprehensive planning. A recent study by the Risky Business Project, a bipartisan coalition of business and policy leaders, warns that Florida has more private property at risk from flooding than any other state. The study states: "By 2030, $69 billion in coastal property in Florida could flood at high tide that is not currently at risk. That amount is projected to continue to climb to $152 billion in coastal Florida property by 2050. Storm-related losses linked to climate change are expected to increase an average of $1.3 billion every year by 2030, or by $4 billion yearly on average by 2050. Even at mean sea level, more property could flood with rising seas: up to about $15 billion worth by 2030."

In 2015, the Florida Legislature passed CS/CS/CS/SB 1094 to require the mandatory redevelopment component of the coastal management elements of comprehensive plans include "development and redevelopment principles, strategies, and engineering solutions that reduce the flood risk in coastal areas which results from high-tide events, storm surge, flash floods, stormwater runoff, and the related impacts of sea-level rise." This could be interpreted to mean that local governments now must consider sea level rise in development and redevelopment. ■

2016 FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS TEAM

C. Scott Dudley
Director,
Legislative Affairs
sdudley@flcities.com
- State and Federal Legislative Issues
- Governmental Relations

Ryan Matthews
Associate Director,
Legislative Affairs
rmatthews@flcities.com
Energy, Environment and Natural Resources
- Environmental
- Energy
- General Utilities
- Solid Waste
- Stormwater
- Water Quality/

Casey Cook
Senior Legislative Advocate
ccook@flcities.com
Urban Administration
- Public Safety
- Building Code/ Construction
- Purchasing
- Ordinance/Code Enforcement
- Emergency Management
- Public Records/ Public Meetings
- Special Districts

Amber Hughes
Legislative Advocate
ahughes@flcities.com
Finance, Taxation and Personnel
- Finance & Taxation
- Revenues & Budgeting
- Insurance
- Personnel & Collective Bargaining
- Workers' Compensation
- Retirement/Pension Issues
- Telecommunications

David Cruz
Assistant General Counsel
dcruz@flcities.com
Growth Management and Economic Affairs
- Community Redevelopment
- Economic Development
- Growth Management
- Annexation
- Property Rights
- Tort Liability
- Eminent Domain
- Ethics/Elections

Megan Sirjane-Samples
Legislative Advocate
msirjanes-samples@flcities.com
Transportation and Intergovernmental Relations
- Rights-of-Way
- Billboards
- Transportation/ Highway Safety
- Charter Counties
- Charter Schools
- Affordable Housing/ Foreclosures
- Gaming

2016 FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS TEAM

John Thomas
Senior Director, Membership and Public Affairs
jthomas@flcities.com

Holly McPhail
Legislative Assistant
hmcphail@flcities.com

Allison Payne
Manager, Advocacy Programs and Federal Affairs
apayne@flcities.com

Erika Bowen
Administrative Assistant
ebowen@flcities.com

Kraig Conn
Deputy General Counsel and Legislative Counsel
kconn@flcities.com

Lisa Dove
Administrative Assistant
ldove@flcities.com

2015-2016 KEY DATES*

SEPTEMBER

16-18 House/Senate Interim Committee Weeks

OCTOBER

5-9 House/Senate Interim Committee Weeks
7-8 Federal Action Strike Team (FAST) Fly-In Washington, D.C.
19-23 House/Senate Interim Committee Weeks
19-31 2015 Special Session C

NOVEMBER

1-6 2015 Special Session C
2-6 House/Senate Interim Committee Weeks
4-7 NLC Congress of Cities Nashville, TN
16-20 House/Senate Interim Committee Weeks
19-20 55th FLC Legislative Conference Embassy Suites Orlando, Lake Buena Vista
30 House/Senate Interim Committee Weeks

DECEMBER

1-4 House/Senate Interim Committee Weeks

JANUARY

12 Legislative Session Convenes

FEBRUARY

2-3 Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days Tallahassee

MARCH

5-9 NLC Congressional City Conference Washington, DC
11 Last Day of Regular Session

AUGUST

18-20 FLC 90th Annual Conference The Diplomat, Hollywood

*Dates subject to change

The following city officials served as chairs and vice chairs of the Florida League of Cities legislative policy committees. We thank them and the hundreds of municipals officials who participated in the development of these legislative priorities.

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Chair: **Councilmember Stephany Eley,** City of West Melbourne
Vice Chair: **Mayor Oliver Gilbert,** City of Miami Gardens

FINANCE, TAXATION AND PERSONNEL

Chair: **Commissioner Jim Norton,** City of Weston
Vice Chair: **Councilman James Renninger,** Town of Orange Park

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Chair: **Councilwoman Prebble Ramswell,** City of Destin
Vice-Chair: **Mayor Bill Capote,** Town of Palm Bay

TRANSPORTATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Chair: **Commissioner Jose Alvarez,** City of Kissimmee
Vice Chair: **Council Member Jim Burch,** City of Cape Coral

URBAN ADMINISTRATION

Chair: **Commissioner Dan Daley,** City of Coral Springs
Vice-Chair: **Council Chair Dawn Pardo,** City of Riviera Beach

The Action Agenda reflects the priorities of 411 municipalities, as prepared by the Florida League of Cities' five legislative policy committees and adopted by the full membership at the League's 89th Annual Conference, August 15, 2015, in Orlando.

2015-2016 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mayor Matthew Surrency, Hawthorne

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Mayor Susan Haynie, Boca Raton

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Commissioner Gil Ziffer, Tallahassee

The Florida League of Cities, Inc., formed in 1922, represents the municipalities of Florida. Its mission is to concentrate the influence of all city, town and village officials upon other policymaking bodies for the purpose of shaping legislation and public policy, sharing the advantages of cooperative action, and exchanging ideas and experiences.

For more information on the League's legislative initiatives, please contact:

Florida League of Cities
P.O. Box 1757
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1757
Phone: (850) 222-9684
Fax: (850) 222-3806

Visit the League's website at *www.floridaleagueofcities.com.*