



DAILY BRIEF

Legislative Session



FROM MARCH 21, 2023

ENERGY

SB 322 – Relating to Natural Gas Fuel Taxes

On Tuesday, March 21, [SB 322](#) by Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) was heard by the Senate Finance and Tax Committee and was reported favorably with 10 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

In 2014 the Florida legislature passed a measure that provided for a sales tax exemption for natural gas fuels until January 1st, 2024. HB 529 would extend this tax exemption until January 1st, 2026. Many logistical and industrial operators in Florida use natural gas fleets to service their customers. This relief has allowed Florida businesses to keep operating costs low, which trickles down to lower costs for consumers. In addition to the economic pros of HB 529, the environmental impacts are very substantial. These cost-cutting measures keep Florida's business market competitive against other states, improve our energy independence, and retain jobs in the sunshine state.

SB 322 will now go to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration.

AIF supports legislation that reduces the state sales tax on natural gas.

HB 821 – Relating to Renewable Energy Cost Recovery

On Tuesday, March 21, [HB 821](#) by Representative Brad Yeager (R-New Port Richey) was heard by the House Energy, Communications & Cybersecurity Subcommittee and was reported favorable with 18 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill allows electric and natural gas public utilities to recover through rates the costs for renewable natural gas (RNG) and hydrogen infrastructure projects. This will help encourage the production and use of RNG and provides for fuel diversification.

HB 821 will now go to the State Administration & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee for consideration.

AIF supports legislation that will enable utilities to develop renewable energy resources using the technology and scale that makes most sense for those utilities and their customers.

AGRICULTURE

HB 1279 – Relating to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

On Tuesday, March 21, [**SB 1279**](#) by Senator Jay Collins (R-Tampa) was heard by the House Agriculture, Conservation & Resiliency Subcommittee and was reported favorably with 17 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

HB 1279 primarily creates a program for sales tax exemptions for production materials used by agricultural producers. The program will allow farmers to apply for and use a Farm Tax Exempt Agricultural Materials (TEAM) card to receive the exemptions. This program works similarly in Georgia and is beneficial to the agriculture community there as well. HB 1279 requires state agencies, universities, and colleges to give preference to food commodities grown or produced in Florida under certain purchasing agreements. Among other mostly technical changes, HB 1279 also revises and eliminates several advisory councils under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

HB 1279 will now go to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government.

AIF supports sales tax exemptions for Florida’s agricultural producers and efforts to make these exemptions easier to access.

TRANSPORTATION

HB 645 – Unmanned Aircraft Systems Act of 2023

On Tuesday, March 21, [**HB 645**](#) by Representative Robbie Brackett was heard by the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee and was reported favorably with 17 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill amends the definition of “critical infrastructure facility” to include a deepwater port or a railroad switching yard.

HB 645 will now go to the House Infrastructure Strategies Committee for consideration.

AIF supports adding greater protection for Florida’s deepwater ports and railyards by including them and their facilities as critical infrastructure in Florida law.

TAXATION

SB 1432 – Relating to Communications Services Tax

On Tuesday, March 21, [SB 1432](#) by Senator Jay Trumbull (R-Panama City) was heard by the Senate Regulated Industries Committee and was reported favorably with 9 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

SB 1432 provides a decrease in the tax rate on the retail sale of communication services and keeps the decreased rate until 2026. The term “communications services” means the transmission, conveyance, or routing of voice, data, audio, video, or any other information or signals, including video services, to a point, or between or among points, by or through any electronic, radio, satellite, cable, optical, microwave, or other medium or method, regardless of the protocol used for such transmission or conveyance.

SB 1432 will now go to the Senate Community Affairs Committee for consideration.

AIF supports continued reductions in the state portion of the communications services tax and supports reviewing and standardizing the local communications services tax rates.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HB 1221 – Relating to Broadband Internet Service Providers

On Tuesday, March 21, [HB 1221](#) by Representative Josie Tomkow (R-Polk City) was heard by the House Energy, Communications & Cybersecurity Subcommittee and was reported favorable with a vote of 18 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

HB 1221 seeks to create a level playing field in broadband deployment. Access to Cooperative Utility poles on reasonable terms and conditions is necessary for broadband services to be

deployed in many areas across Florida. AIF believes parties should be encouraged to come to an agreement related to pole access and reasonable terms and conditions.

HB 1221 will now go to the House State Administration & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee for consideration.

AIF supports the expansion of broadband services to all Floridians and supports legislation that seeks to promote that goal.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

HB 1511 – Relating to Cybersecurity

On Tuesday, March 21, [HB 1511](#) by Representative Mike Giallombardo (R-Cape Coral) was heard by the House Energy, Communications & Cybersecurity Subcommittee and was reported favorable with 18 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

Cybersecurity is a significant and growing concern and recent cyberattacks have continued to place a focus on the issue. Among other things, HB 1511 provides liability protection for businesses that have adopted a cybersecurity program that complies with industry-recognized cybersecurity standards. This helps to encourage businesses to take the proper cybersecurity safeguards while protecting them from liability if they have taken the proper precautions. The bill also allows the Florida Digital Service to operate more independently with respect to technology and cybersecurity.

HB 1511 will now go to the House State Administration & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee for consideration.

AIF supports measures that help aid the prevention of cyberattacks and data breaches in a way that does not create a new cause of action.