As we enter the final week of the Legislative Session, Florida lawmakers have ironed out many major spending differences and are expected to wrap up the 2021 regular Legislative Session this Friday. The House and Senate budget chiefs have now publicly accepted compromises on spending and must finalize the fiscal 2021-2022 budget by no later than Tuesday evening, due to a legally required 72-hour “cooling-off” period before a final vote. The only major concern left are the House and Senate’s proposed plans surrounding the approximately $10 billion that the State of Florida received from the American Rescue Plan Act.

It is also expected that the Florida Legislature will return to the state Capitol two weeks later, for a Special Session to consider a new gaming compact with the Seminole Tribe.

Lastly, CFHLA continues to monitor all of the legislative issues that are important to the Industry; including dangerous language to preempt the regulation of vacation rentals in the State of Florida, revisions to the Tourist Development Tax, workforce housing and updates to the Gaming Compact.
CALL TO ACTION - TAX PACKAGE

Last week, the Florida House released a new tax package that includes provisions that addresses the Tourist Development Tax. This change would require that all new or increased Tourist Development and Convention Development Taxes be approved by referendum and expands use to include financing flood mitigation projects.

The House tax package includes the same language from HB 1429 and SB 2008 - the companion House and Senate bills that are opposed by CFHLA.

HB 7061 - Representative Payne - Passed on the House Floor and sent to the Senate.

SB 7068 - The Florida Senate has filed its own version of the tax package that does not include any revisions to the TDT. The bill has been placed on today's Special Order Calendar (April 26th).

CFHLA OPPOSES THE CHANGES TO THE TDT IN THE HOUSES TAX PACKAGE AND SUPPORTS THE SENATES VERSION

GAMING COMPACT

Last week, Governor DeSantis signed a new thirty-year Gaming Compact with the Seminole Tribe of Florida. This new gaming compact would give the tribe exclusive rights to offer craps and roulette at its facilities and oversee sports betting at their Hard Rock locations, at pari-mutuel facilities, and through digital platforms.

It is estimated that under this agreement, the state will collect $2.5 billion from the Tribe over the next five years. A Special Session to address the gaming compact has already been announced and is expected to begin May 17th.

As a result, the gaming bills filed in the final weeks of session have been put on hold to be addressed in May, after the completion of the regular session.

SPB 7076/7078/7080
HB 7073/7075

CFHLA MONITORING

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX (TDT)

A bill in each chamber that proposes changes to the Tourist
Development Tax (TDT) statute that would require a county to renew its existing TDT via referendum every five years. Additionally, any new pennies levied would also be required to be approved by referendum. **Language from these bills has been added to the Tax Package presented in the House.**

**HB 1429** - Representative Avila - **Passed** on the House Floor by a vote of 114-2.

**SB 2008** - Senator Diaz - **Awaiting hearing** in Community Affairs Committee after being Temporarily Postponed on March 30th.

**CFHLA OPPOSES**

**VISIT FLORIDA**

A bill in each chamber that authorizes the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation (VISIT FLORIDA) to roll over unspent appropriations into succeeding fiscal years. The bill would also remove the sunset date in VISIT FLORIDA’s enabling statute.

Additionally, the Florida House has proposed to fund VISIT FLORIDA on a year-by-year basis, while the Senate is holding firm on plans to keep it funded annually at $50 million.

**SB 778** - Senator Hooper - **No action taken** in the Senate last week.

**HB 675** - Representative Plasencia - **No action taken** in the House last week.

The bill has not been heard in Committee since early March, so it is unlikely to be passed during the 2021 Legislative Session.

**CFHLA SUPPORTS**

**IN-STATE TOURISM MARKETING**

A proposed appropriations project of **$2 million** will be used for an In-State Tourism Marketing Campaign to drive visitation to the State of Florida.

**HB 3645** - Representative Williamson - Status of this appropriation will be decided in the **budget conferencing process**.

**CFHLA SUPPORTS**

**VACATION RENTALS**

A bill in each chamber that requires advertising platforms, such as **AirBnB** and **VRBO**, to remit specified taxes imposed on some transactions. It also requires all licenses issued by the Division of Hotels & Restaurants of DBPR to be displayed conspicuously. Additionally, these bills would preempt regulation of vacation rentals to the State of Florida, which would prohibit local law, ordinance, or regulation from allowing or requiring inspections or licensing of public lodging establishments.

**SB 522** - Senator Diaz - The Senate bill was amended on March 11th.
by deleting provisions preempting control to the state, allowing current local laws governing vacation rentals to stay as they are, thus preserving some local control. CFHLA supports the preservation of local control in the Senate version of this bill. This bill was temporarily postponed by the Rules Committee on April 20th.

HB 219 - Representative Fischer - Awaiting a hearing in House Ways & Means Committee after being temporarily postponed from the March 22nd agenda.

The bill has now been temporarily postponed from its most recent committee hearings. It is unlikely to pass during the 2021 Legislative Session.

CFHLA SUPPORTS THE AMENDED SB 522

WORKFORCE HOUSING

During Week 6 of the Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature approved SB 2512 and the bill is now headed to Governor DeSantis for his consideration. This bill will reduce the percentage of money that'll go towards affordable/workforce housing and funnel $200 million (versus $423 million) towards affordable housing projects. The remaining dollars will now be used for issues such as sea level rise and septic-to-sewer wastewater conversion systems and this total is up from nearly $140 million in the original SB 2512 bill.

CFHLA MONITORING

COVID-19 LIABILITY PROTECTIONS

On Monday, March 29th, Governor Ron DeSantis signed the COVID-19 Liability Protections bill into law.

CFHLA SUPPORTS

IN THE NEWS

Special Session for gaming compact slated for May 17
New Data Shows Air Travel Bouncing Back
IAAPA’S annual amusement industry expo will return to Orlando, but not to normal.
Hospitality businesses struggle to attract workers during COVID-19 pandemic
Orlando International Airport Moves Up in World’s Busiest Airports List.

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