



FLORIDA'S "FAST ACT": STREAMLINING BUILDING PERMITS

Pending legislation (HB 1139 / SB 1752) would significantly improve the state's business climate by increasing the efficiency of the permitting process and providing an increased level of certainty to the private sector

Background

- Local governments are vested with the responsibility of enforcing the Florida Building Code; in order to construct, alter, repair or demolish any building, a permit must be obtained from the local government enforcing agency.
- While fully recognizing and appreciating this critically important duty, lengthy processes and unpredictable delays have created a difficult climate in which to make sound business decisions, leading to a competitive disadvantage for Florida businesses.

HB 1139 (Rep. Plakon) / SB 1752 (Sen. Perry)

- These bills are informally referred to as the FAST Act, as they mirror a similar effort in Georgia titled the Fairness, Accountability, Simplification and Transparency (FAST) Act.
- The bills require all counties and municipalities to establish optional priority processes in which inspections may be expedited. The local jurisdictions would design the programs however they wish and tailor them to meet local needs -- they simply must provide some sort of expedited process as an option.
- The county or municipality may charge an additional fee for the expedited process, but it may not exceed two times the baseline fee for the inspection type being expedited.
- If a local government misses its own deadline, thus delaying the approval process, the fees it could collect would decline. The bill specifies that the fee would be reduced by 10 percent of the original amount for every 10 business days the local government fails to meet its deadline.
- There would be no fiscal impact on the state government, and local government revenues will increase to the extent that its expedited permitting process is utilized.

Action Requested

Requiring an expedited permitting option, retaining flexibility at the local level, and incentivizing local governments to meet their own deadlines, would provide the certainty needed to better plan building projects. **Please support HB 1139 and SB 1752.**