

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/CS/HB 865 — Department of Transportation

by Government Accountability Committee; Transportation and Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee; Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee; and Rep. Williamson and others (CS/CS/SB 1118 by Appropriations Committee; Transportation Committee; and Senators Gainer and Rouson)

The bill contains the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) 2017 Legislative Package, as well as additional transportation-related provisions. More specifically, the bill:

- Directs the FDOT, in consultation with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, to develop a Florida Smart City Challenge Grant Program allowing applicants to compete for funding for demonstrated and documented adoption of emerging technologies and their impact on the transportation system.
- Increases the allowable gross vehicle weight for vehicles using natural-gas fueling systems by up to 2,000 pounds under certain conditions, resulting in a reduced overweight penalty and avoiding a potential loss of federal funds;
- Aligns state and federal law by mandating bridge inspections at intervals as required by the Federal Highway Administration, as opposed to intervals not exceeding two years, resulting in compliance with revised national bridge inspection requirements and avoiding a potential diversion of federal funds;
- Increase the current \$120,000 cap on "fast response" contracts to \$250,000 to account for increased construction costs due to inflation;
- Authorizes the FDOT and certain local governmental entities to prescribe and enforce reasonable rules or regulations with reference to placing and maintaining within the right-of-way limits of any road or publicly owned rail corridors under their respective jurisdictions any voice or data communications services lines or wireless facilities;
- Allows turnpike bonds to be validated at the option of the Division of Bond Finance and limits the location of publication of certain related notices to Leon County;
- Requires the FDOT to undertake an economic feasibility study relating to the acquisition of the Garcon Point Bridge and to submit the completed study to the Governor, the Senate President, and the House Speaker by January 1, 2018;
- Exempts emergency work program amendments from a requirement for Legislative Budget Commission review and approval of any work program amendment in excess of \$3 million that also adds a new project, or phase thereof, to the adopted work program, under specified conditions;
- Repeals the Florida Highway Beautification Council, leaving the FDOT to administer the award of grants for beautification of the State Highway System;
- Defines "department" to mean the FDOT for purposes of part II of ch. 343, F.S., relating to the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA);
- Prohibits the SFRTA from entering into, extending, or renewing any contract without the FDOT's prior review and written approval of the proposed expenditures if such contract may be funded with FDOT-provided funds;
- Deems funds provided by the FDOT to the SFRTA to be state financial assistance subject to specified requirements;

- Requires the FDOT to provide funds to the SFRTA in accordance with a written agreement containing certain provisions;
- Authorizes the FDOT to advance funds to the SFTA at the start of each fiscal year, with monthly payments for maintenance and dispatch on the South Florida rail Corridor over the fiscal year on a reimbursement basis, and requires a reconciliation of the advance against remaining invoices in the last quarter of the fiscal year;
- Required the FDOT, on or before October 31, 2017, to submit to the Governor, the Senate President, and the House Speaker a report providing a comprehensive review of the boundaries and headquarters of each of the FDOT's districts and to provide, along with its report, a study on the expenses associated with creating an additional district with the FDOT's Fort Myers urban office as the district headquarters;
- Authorizes the FDOT secretary to enroll the state in any federal pilot program or project for the collection and study of data for the review of federal or state roadway safety, infrastructure sustainability, congestion mitigation, transportation system efficiency, autonomous vehicle technology, or capacity challenges; and
- Revises cross-references and makes conforming changes.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 33-0; House 118-0