

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 13 Sovereignty Submerged Lands

SPONSOR(S): Frishe; Harrell

TIED BILLS: None **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 88

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee	14 Y, 0 N	Smith	Blalock
2) Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N	Helpling	Massengale
3) State Affairs Committee	16 Y, 0 N	Smith	Hamby

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund is responsible for the administration and disposition of the state's sovereign submerged lands, including the authority to adopt regulations pertaining to anchoring, mooring, or otherwise attaching to the bottom and the establishment of anchorages. Waterfront landowners must receive the board's authorization to build docks and related structures on sovereign submerged lands. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is required by law to perform all staff functions on behalf of the board.

The board has promulgated detailed rules regulating the design of docks and related structures, determining whether a lease is required, and setting the amount of fees a lessee must pay to the board. The DEP determines whether a lease is required for a person to build a dock or related structure on sovereign submerged lands based on a number of factors, including:

- Location within or outside of an aquatic preserve;
- Area of sovereign submerged land preempted;
- Number of wet slips or the number of boats the structure is designed to moor;
- Whether the dock is for a single-family residence or a multi-unit dwelling;
- Whether the dock generates revenue;
- Whether the dock is "private residential" or "commercial, industrial and other revenue generating/income related."

This bill provides lease requirements for private residential docks and related structures on sovereign submerged lands. Specifically, the bill:

- Extends the maximum term for an initial standard lease and for successive renewal to 10 years from the 5 years maximum currently provided by rule and requires inspection by the DEP at least once every 10 years instead of every 5 years.
- Requires standard lease contracts to disclose all applicable lease fees as established by the board.
- Exempts multi-family docks and structures that require a lease from paying a fee on minimal amounts of sovereignty submerged lands that are leased to reflect the same size-based exemption currently in place for single-family docks.
- Specifies that lessees whose upland property qualifies for a homestead exemption are not required to pay a lease fee on revenue derived from the transfer of fee simple or beneficial ownership.
- Specifies that the board and the DEP are not prohibited from imposing additional application fees, regulatory permitting fees, or other lease requirements as otherwise authorized by law.

On February 10, 2012, the Revenue Estimating Conference adopted an estimate that the additional lease exemptions will result in an annual recurring reduction in revenues of \$0.1 million to the General Revenue Fund and \$1 million to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund.

The bill also contains a recurring appropriation of \$1 million from the General Revenue Fund to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund beginning in Fiscal Year 2012-13.

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.

STORAGE NAME: h0013e.SAC

DATE: 2/22/2012

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Introduction

Upon statehood, Florida gained title to all sovereign submerged lands¹ within its boundaries, to be held in trust for the public.² The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund is responsible for the acquisition, administration, management, control, supervision, conservation, protection, and disposition of such lands.³ The Florida Constitution requires the sale of such lands to be authorized by law, but only when in the public interest, and private use of portions of such lands may be authorized by law, but only when not contrary to the public interest.⁴ When disposing of sovereign submerged lands, the board is required to “ensure maximum benefit and use.”⁵ The board has the authority to adopt regulations pertaining to anchoring, mooring, or otherwise attaching to the bottom and the establishment of anchorages on sovereign submerged lands.⁶

Florida recognizes “riparian rights” for landowners with waterfront property bordering on navigable waters.⁷ These rights include ingress, egress, boating, bathing, fishing, and others as defined by law.⁸ Riparian landowners must obtain the board’s authorization for installation and maintenance of docks, piers, and boat ramps on sovereign submerged land.⁹ Under the board’s rules, “dock” generally means a fixed or floating structure, including moorings and access walkways, used for the purpose of mooring and accessing vessels.¹⁰ Authorization may be in the form of consent by rule,¹¹ letter of consent,¹² or lease.¹³ All leases authorizing activities on sovereign submerged lands must include provisions for lease fee adjustments and annual payments.¹⁴

The bill creates s. 253.0347, F.S., relating to leases of sovereignty submerged lands for private residential single-family docks or piers, private residential multi-family docks or piers, and private residential multi-slip docks located in and outside of an aquatic preserve. For these types of leases, the bill affects (1) lease duration, (2) lease fee applicability and calculation, and (3) site inspection.

For ease of reading, “private residential single-family or multi-family dock” is used in this analysis to refer to private residential single-family docks or piers, private residential multi-family docks or piers, and private residential multi-slip docks.¹⁵

¹ In Florida, “submerged lands” are “publicly owned lands below the ordinary high-water mark of fresh waters and below the mean high-water line of salt waters extending seaward to the outer jurisdiction of the state.” Section 253.03(8)(b), F.S.

² *Broward v. Marbry*, 50 So. 826, 829-30 (Fla. 1909).

³ Section 253.03(1), F.S. (2010).

⁴ S. 11, Art. X of the State Constitution

⁵ Section 253.03(7)(a), F.S.

⁶ Section 253.03(7)(b), F.S.

⁷ Section 253.141(1), F.S. These rights are appurtenant to and inseparable from the riparian land; the rights inure to the property owner, but the rights are not proprietary in nature. *Id.*

⁸ Section 253.141(1), F.S.

⁹ 18-21.005(1)(d), F.A.C. (2010).

¹⁰ See 18-20.003(19), F.A.C.; 18-21.003(20), F.A.C.

¹¹ 18-21.005(1)(b), F.A.C.

¹² 18-21.005(1)(c), F.A.C.

¹³ 18-21.005(1)(d), F.A.C.

¹⁴ 18-21.008(1)(b)(2), F.A.C.

¹⁵ For definitions of these terms as used in the board’s rules, see 18-20.003(44), F.A.C. (“private residential single-family dock”); 18-20.003(45) (“private residential multi-slip dock”), 18-21.003(47), F.A.C. (“private residential multi-family dock or pier”); 18-21.003(48), F.A.C. (“private residential single-family dock or pier”).

Duration of Leases

Present Situation

Currently, the duration of a standard lease is 5 years.¹⁶ Extended term leases with durations up to 25 years are also available under limited circumstances if approved by the board.¹⁷ According to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the vast majority of residential leases are standard leases with a duration of 5 years.

Effects of Proposed Bill

The bill establishes a 10-year maximum duration for initial sovereignty submerged land standard leases for private residential single-family or multi-family docks. Upon agreement of the parties and compliance with all applicable laws and rules, such leases may be renewed for successive terms of up to 10 years. The DEP does not anticipate granting leases of a duration shorter than 10 years.

Lease Fees and Calculation

Present Situation

The board has promulgated extensive and detailed rules regulating the design of docks and related structures. Multiple factors jointly determine which docks on sovereign submerged land require a lease, and subsequently when lease fees apply, including:

- Location within or outside of an aquatic preserve;¹⁸
- Area of sovereign submerged land preempted;¹⁹
- Number of wet slips or the number of boats the structure is designed to moor;
- Whether the dock is for a single-family residence or a multi-unit dwelling;
- Whether the dock generates revenue;
- Whether the dock is “private residential”²⁰ or “commercial, industrial and other revenue generating/income related.”²¹

The following currently require a lease and lease fees:

- All revenue-generating docks.²²
- Outside of an aquatic preserve:
 - Single-family docks that preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline.

¹⁶ 18-21.008(1), F.A.C.

¹⁷ 18-21.008(2)(a), F.A.C. Extended term leases are available where the use of sovereignty submerged lands has an expected life or amortization period equal to or greater than the requested lease term and where the applicant demonstrates the following: that the facility or activity provides access to public waters and sovereignty submerged lands for the general public on a first-come, first-served basis; that the facility is constructed, operated, or maintained by the government, or funded by government secured bonds with a term greater than or equal to the requested lease term; or that an extended term is necessary to satisfy unique operational constraints. *Id.*

¹⁸ Aquatic preserves are areas specifically designated by the legislature as having exceptional biological, aesthetic, or scientific value. See s. 258.37, F.S. (2010).

¹⁹ Relevant area is determined by a ratio of the area of sovereign submerged land preempted by the dock to the total linear feet of shoreline a riparian landowner holds on the affected water body (i.e., sovereign submerged land area in square feet : feet of shoreline owned). See 18-21.008(4)(a), (b), F.A.C. However, the board may allow exceptions to regulation based on this ratio in certain circumstances when the dock is consistent with the public interest. See 18-21.008(4)(b), F.A.C.

²⁰ These generally include docks used for private, recreational or leisure purposes. See 18-20.003(44), (45), F.A.C.

²¹ “Commercial, industrial and other revenue generating/income related docks” means docking facilities for any activity which produces income, through rental or any other means, or which serves as an accessory facility to other rental, commercial or industrial operations. It includes, but is not limited to, docking for: marinas, restaurants, hotels, motels, commercial fishing, shipping, boat or ship construction, repair, and sales. 18-20.003(16), F.A.C.

²² 18-21.005(1)(d)(5), F.A.C.

- Multi-family docks that preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline and include more than two wet slips.
- Within an aquatic preserve, other than the Boca Ciega Bay or Pinellas County aquatic preserves:
 - Single-family docks that preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline.²³
 - Multi-slip²⁴ docks that include two or fewer wet slips and preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline.²⁵
 - Multi-slip docks that include three or more wet slips and exceed both the design criteria for single-family docks and preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline.²⁶
- Within the Boca Ciega Bay or Pinellas County aquatic preserves:²⁷
 - Single-family docks that preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline.²⁸
 - Multi-slip docks that preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline or include more than two wet slips.²⁹

Lease fees for both standard and extended term leases are calculated through a fee formula, with adjustments for applicable discounts, surcharges, and other payments.³⁰ The annual lease fee for a standard lease is based on either 6 percent of the annual income, the base fee, or the minimum annual fee, whichever is greatest.³¹ The base fee is approximately 15 cents per square foot per year.³² The minimum annual fee is approximately \$460, adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index.³³ Private residential multi-family docks that include 10 or more wet slips developed in conjunction with upland property may be subject to a one-time premium when a lease is initiated calculated at three times the base fee.³⁴ The extended term lease formula includes a multiplier for the number of years of the lease term.³⁵

Revenue derived from sale of the property is currently included as revenue for the purposes of calculating the annual lease fee.

Effects of Proposed Bill

The bill requires lease contracts for sovereignty submerged lands for private residential single-family or multi-family docks to disclose the lease fees as established by the board.

The bill also extends the same financial benefit that currently exists for private residential single-family docks—exclusion from lease fees for a preempted area of 10 square feet or less for each linear foot of shoreline—to private residential multi-family docks. This benefit is extended only to private residential

²³ 18-21.005(1)(c)(2), F.A.C.

²⁴ The term “private residential multi-slip dock” refers to docks and related structures for multi-unit residential dwellings in aquatic preserves, whereas the term “private residential multi-family dock” addresses similar structures outside of aquatic preserves. 18-20.003(45), F.A.C.; 18-21.003(48), F.A.C.

²⁵ 18-20.004(5)(c)(1), F.A.C.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Boca Ciega Bay and Pinellas County aquatic preserves are in highly developed and urban areas. As such, certain regulatory differences exist for the building and maintenance of docks and other structures in these aquatic preserves.

²⁸ See 18-21.005(1)(c)(2), F.A.C.; 18-21.005(1)(d)(1.), F.A.C.

²⁹ Whereas in most aquatic preserves multi-slip docks that preempt an area more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline are effectively prohibited, in the Boca Ciega Bay and Pinellas County aquatic preserves multi-slip docks may preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each foot of shoreline and less than 30 square feet for each foot of shoreline, with a lease from the board. 18-20.019(7)(a), F.A.C.

³⁰ 18-21.011(1)(a), F.A.C.

³¹ *Id.*

³² 18-21.011(1)(b)(1), F.A.C.

³³ 18-21.011(1)(b)(4), F.A.C.

³⁴ 18-21.011(1)(c), F.A.C.

³⁵ 18-21.011(1)(a), F.A.C.

multi-family dwellings that include no more than one wet slip for each approved upland residential unit. As such, lessees of sovereign submerged land for private residential multi-family docks that include no more than one wet slip for each approved upland residential unit are not required to pay lease fees on a preempted area of 10 square feet or less for each linear foot of shoreline. However, those private residential multi-family docks that include no more than one wet slip for each approved upland residential unit but do preempt an area of more than 10 square feet for each linear foot of shoreline (exceeding the ratio under which private residential single-family docks receive the exemption from lease fees) are subject to lease fees only on the preempted area of sovereign submerged land that exceeds 10 square feet for each linear foot of shoreline.

In addition, the bill establishes that lessees whose upland property qualifies for a homestead exemption at the time of any transfer of fee simple or beneficial ownership of the property are not required to pay a lease fee on revenue derived from the transfer. Thus, the 6 percent of revenue from such a sale would be applicable to a lease fee only upon the first transfer from a non-resident developer or subsequent sale by a person who is not eligible for a homestead exemption under to s. 196.031, F.S.

The bill also codifies current board rules regarding income generated through leased sovereign submerged lands. A lessee of sovereignty submerged lands for a private residential single-family or multi-family dock must pay a lease fee on any income derived from a wet slip, dock, or pier, as determined by the board.

Lastly, the board and the DEP are not prohibited from imposing additional application fees, regulatory permitting fees, or other lease requirements as authorized by law.

Site Inspection

Present Situation

According to board rule, the DEP or water management district staff must inspect a leased site at least once every 5 years to determine compliance with the terms and conditions of the lease.³⁶

Effects of Proposed Bill

The bill provides by statute for the DEP to inspect sites under lease for private residential single-family or multi-family docks at least once every 10 years. Although the bill does not include authority for the water management districts to conduct inspections, currently they perform only regulatory reviews of lease applications and do not conduct proprietary reviews, including inspections.

Appropriation

The bill provides a recurring appropriation of \$1 million from the General Revenue Fund to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund beginning in Fiscal Year 2012-13.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Creates s. 253.0347, F.S., specifying the maximum initial terms for standard leases of sovereignty submerged lands for private residential single-family docks or piers, private residential multi-family docks or piers, and private residential multi-slip docks; requiring lease contracts to specify lease fees; adding an exemption for lease fees below a certain threshold for certain multi-family and multi-slip leases; eliminating lease fees on revenue generated through transfer of fee simple or beneficial ownership if property is entitled to a homestead exemption under to s. 196.031, F.S.; requiring the payment of lease fees upon income generated from sovereign submerged land leases; requiring inspections at least every 10 years.

³⁶ 18-21.008(1)(b)(4), F.A.C.

Section 2: Provides a recurring appropriation.

Section 2: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2012.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

On February 10, 2012, the Revenue Estimating Conference adopted an estimate that the lease exemptions in this bill will result in an annual recurring reduction of \$0.1 million to the General Revenue Fund and \$1 million to the Department of Environmental Protection's Internal Improvement Trust Fund.

2. Expenditures:

The bill specifies for a recurring appropriation of \$1 million from the General Revenue Fund to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund beginning in Fiscal Year 2012-13.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

According to the Department of Environmental Protection, this bill would result in a loss of \$37,868 in sales tax and \$6,311 in county discretionary tax.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

This bill would have an undetermined positive impact on the private sector, based on reduced lease fees under exemptions created.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

This bill appears to implicate the mandate provision in s. 18, Art. VII, of the State Constitution by reducing the authority of the local governments to collect certain sales tax and discretionary tax; however, the bill appears to meet the insignificant fiscal impact exemption in the constitution.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill specifies that this new section of law does not prohibit the board or the DEP from imposing additional application fees, regulatory permitting fees, or other lease requirements as otherwise authorized by law.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.