

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2012 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Agriculture

CS/CS/HB 1237 — Department of Citrus

by State Affairs Committee; Rulemaking and Regulation Subcommittee; Rep. Albritton and others (CS/SB 1648 by Agriculture Committee and Senators Hays and Dean)

This bill contains substantial revisions to the Florida Citrus Code which was created in 1949 to regulate and protect the citrus industry. It:

- Updates the short title from “The Florida Citrus Code of 1949” to the “Florida Citrus Code;”
- Updates terminology to more correctly reflect current processes;
- Revises the qualifications and terms of members of the Florida Citrus Commission (commission) and provides for the members to serve staggered 3-year terms;
- Requires the commission to review the citrus districts every 5 years and, upon certain findings, make recommendations to the Legislature for redistricting of the districts;
- Requires the Department of Citrus (department) to be staffed 5 days per week, 40 hours per week. Allows the executive director, with the commission’s approval, to establish alternative schedules for individual employees to ensure maximum efficiencies;
- Clarifies and readopts the department’s authority to adopt rules to implement certain powers and duties;
- Authorizes the department to conduct, or arrange to be conducted, research related to disease and crop efficiency that advances the purpose of the Florida citrus industry and commercialization related to advancing such research;
- Updates obsolete tax language. The bill substitutes the term “assessment” for “excise tax” and sets the maximum assessments for grapefruit, oranges, tangerines, and citrus hybrids entering the primary channel of trade in the fresh and/or processed form;
- Requires persons liable for the periodic payments of assessments to submit a letter of credit from an issuing financial institution located in the United States to guarantee payment;
- Changes the majority of voting members of the commission from nine to seven;
- Specifies dimensions for standard shipping and field boxes for fresh fruit and revises circumstances relating to the use of such boxes; and
- Requires approval of a majority of the commission for any salary adjustment of a department employee who earns \$100,000 or more.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2012.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 115-0