

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/HB 7041 — Space Florida

by Commerce Committee; Regulatory Reform and Economic Development Subcommittee; and Reps. Sirois, Duggan, and others (CS/SB 7048 by Rules Committee and Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee)

The bill revises provisions governing Space Florida to increase collaboration on spaceport activities, enhance transparency measures on spaceport projects, and administratively transfer Space Florida from Enterprise Florida, Inc., to the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). Statutory cross-references are updated to reflect the change in the managing agency. Additional compliance provisions relating to transparency, auditing, and reporting with specific deadlines are established for Space Florida. Results of Space Florida's accomplishments and activities and progress towards the spaceport's master plan and goals are to be incorporated into the DEO's annual report. Space Florida will be subject to evaluation of its effectiveness by the Office of Program and Policy Analysis every 3 years, similar to other public-private partnerships.

The bill creates an independent Space Florida board of directors. The 12-member board consists of the Governor, who shall serve ex officio, or who may appoint a designee, to serve as the chair and a voting member of the board, the Secretary of Transportation or his or her designee, eight members appointed by the Governor and subject to Senate confirmation, one member appointed by the Senate President, and one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Of these board members, three gubernatorial appointees are identified as ex officio, nonvoting members, representing the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, the Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority, and a port district or authority. The bill establishes membership and appointment criteria and term lengths, prohibits compensation, provides per diem and travel limits, allows electronic meetings, and provides quorum requirements. The DEO will conduct training for newly appointed board members.

The bill directs Space Florida to:

- Collaborate, partner, and solicit input from entities who have an interest or stake in the aerospace industry, the spaceport, the spaceport territory, and space exploration.
- Make certain notifications to the Department of Transportation when constructing or maintaining roads within the spaceport territory.
- Include additional economic data in the Space Florida annual report.
- Explain certain travel and entertainment expenditures and address recent audit findings.
- Assess contracts for services by including provisions requiring an independent auditor report of their effectiveness periodically and at the end of the contract.
- Complete a risk-based compliance assessment every 3 years of all internal contracts.

The bill prohibits Space Florida from endorsing any political candidates or making any political campaign donations.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 114-0