

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Community Affairs

CS/HB 755 — Areas of Critical State Concern

by Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee and Rep. Mooney and others (CS/SB 934 by Community Affairs Committee and Senator Rodriguez)

Current law requires any contractor who contracts with the state or any local government or other public authority or private entity for the construction of, or repairs to, a public building or public work must execute and record a payment and performance bond with a surety insurer authorized to do business in Florida as a surety, if the contract is above a certain threshold.

The bill provides an exemption from payment and performance bond requirements for a person entering into a construction contract for work performed on property in an area of critical state concern (ACSC) that is subject to a long-term ground lease of 99 years or more with Habitat for Humanity International, Inc., or its affiliates. The exemption applies at the discretion of the official or board that owns the underlying property and only if the leasehold interest is subject to any claims by persons who qualify as lienors. Under the bill, the underlying real property owned by the state or any county, city, or political subdivision thereof, or by any other public authority, may not be subject to any lien rights created under ch. 713, F.S., relating to construction liens, generally.

The Florida Forever Program is the state's main conservation and recreation lands acquisition program. Thirty-five percent of Florida Forever funds must be distributed to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the acquisition of lands and capital project expenditures described in the Florida Forever Act. The bill extends the date through which at least \$5 million of those funds must be spent on land acquisition within the Florida Keys ACSC. The funding requirement currently applies through the 2026-2027 fiscal year, and the bill extends it through the 2035-2036 fiscal year.

Lastly, the bill expands the existing prohibition on oil and gas drilling near national estuarine research reserves in rural areas of opportunity. Current law prohibits oil and gas drilling, exploration, or production in counties designated as rural areas of opportunity if the proposed site is within 10 miles of a national estuarine research reserve. The bill additionally prohibits such activities within 30 miles of a national estuarine research reserve in a county that is designated as a rural area of opportunity and also contains an ACSC.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 109-0