

The Florida Senate
COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA

REGULATED INDUSTRIES
Senator Bradley, Chair
Senator Pizzo, Vice Chair

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, January 14, 2025
TIME: 4:00—6:00 p.m.
PLACE: *Pat Thomas Committee Room, 412 Knott Building*

MEMBERS: Senator Bradley, Chair; Senator Pizzo, Vice Chair; Senators Bernard, Boyd, Burgess, Calatayud, Fine, Gruters, and Ingoglia

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
		Panel discussion on Milestone Inspections and Structural Integrity Reserve Study requirements and related issues for condominiums in Florida.	
		Other Related Meeting Documents	

Senate Committee on Regulated Industries

Panel discussion on Milestone Inspections and Structural Integrity Reserve Study requirements and related issues for condominiums in Florida.

412 Knott Building

4-6 p.m., January 14, 2025

Panelists

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Milestone Inspection

Milestone inspection is a structural inspection of a building, including an inspection of load-bearing elements and the primary structural members and systems by an architect or engineer for the purpose of attesting to the life safety and adequacy of the structural components of the building. To the extent reasonably possible, determining the general structural condition of the building as it affects the safety of the building. This includes a determination of any necessary maintenance, repair, or replacement of any structural component of the building.

The inspection services may be provided by a team of professionals with the architect or engineer acting as a registered design professional in responsible charge with all work and reports signed and sealed by the appropriate qualified team member.

A condominium or cooperative **three stories or higher** as determined by the Florida Building Code must have a milestone inspection performed by December 31 of the year that the building reaches 30 years of age based on the date the certificate of occupancy was issued and then every 10 years.

If a building reached 30 years of age before July 1, 2022, the inspection must be performed before December 31, 2024.

If a building reaches 30 years of age on or after July 1, 2022, but before December 31, 2024, then the initial inspection must be performed before December 31, 2025.

If a local enforcement agency determines that a building must have a milestone inspection, the agency must provide written notice to the condominium association and any owner of the building not organized as a condominium.

The association must notify its members of the required inspection within 14 days of the receipt of the written notice.

The milestone inspection may have two phases.

Phase one is a visual inspection by a architect or engineer of all areas of the building to provide a qualitative assessment of the structural condition of the building. It must be completed within 180 days after the association and the other building owners receive the notice from the local enforcement agency.

If no substantial structural deterioration is found, the architect or engineer prepares and submits the inspection report to the association, other building owners, and to the local building official in the jurisdiction and a phase two inspection is not required.

“Substantial structural deterioration” means substantial structural distress or substantial structural weakness that negatively affects a building’s general structural condition and integrity.

If substantial structural is identified, then a phase two inspection must be conducted. The inspection may be as extensive or as limited as necessary to fully assess areas of structural distress in order to confirm that the building is structurally sound and safe for its intended use and to recommend a program for fully assessing and repairing distressed and damaged portions of the building.

The phase two report, if required, must be submitted within 180 days after submitting the phase one report. The phase two report must also be sent to the association, other building owners, and to the local building official in the jurisdiction.

The report must indicate the manner and type of inspection, identify any substantial structural deterioration and identify any recommended repairs for the deterioration. It must state if there are unsafe or dangerous conditions. It must recommend any remedial or preventive repair for items that are damaged but are not substantial structural deterioration.

The local enforcement agency may prescribe timelines and penalties to comply with this section.

A local governing body may adopt an ordinance that repairs must be scheduled or commenced within a specified timeframe. However, all repairs must be commenced within 365 days of receiving the report.

If the owner fails to submit proof that the repairs have been scheduled or have commenced as identified in the phase two report, the local enforcement agency must review and determine if the building is unsafe for human occupancy.

Within 45 days of receiving a phase one or phase two report, the association must distribute a copy of an inspector-prepared report summary. If the association is required to have a website, the summary and the full report must be posted on the website.

Selected Statutory Provisions Related to the Structural Integrity Reserve Study

718.103 Definitions.—As used in this chapter, the term:

(28) “Structural integrity reserve study” means a study of the reserve funds required for future major repairs and replacement of the condominium property performed as required under s. 718.112(2)(g).

718.112 Bylaws.—

(2) REQUIRED PROVISIONS.—The bylaws shall provide for the following and, if they do not do so, shall be deemed to include the following:

(f) *Annual budget.*—

1. The proposed annual budget of estimated revenues and expenses must be detailed and must show the amounts budgeted by accounts and expense classifications, including, at a minimum, any applicable expenses listed in s. 718.504(21). The board shall adopt the annual budget at least 14 days before the start of the association's fiscal year. In the event that the board fails to timely adopt the annual budget a second time, it is deemed a minor violation and the prior year's budget shall continue in effect until a new budget is adopted. A multicondominium association must adopt a separate budget of common expenses for each condominium the association operates and must adopt a separate budget of common expenses for the association. In addition, if the association maintains limited common elements with the cost to be shared only by those entitled to use the limited common elements as provided for in s. 718.113(1), the budget or a schedule attached to it must show the amount budgeted for this maintenance. If, after turnover of control of the association to the unit owners, any of the expenses listed in s. 718.504(21) are not applicable, they do not need to be listed.

2.a. In addition to annual operating expenses, the budget must include reserve accounts for capital expenditures and deferred maintenance. These accounts must include, but are not limited to, roof replacement, building painting, and pavement resurfacing, regardless of the amount of deferred maintenance expense or replacement cost, and any other item that has a deferred maintenance expense or replacement cost that exceeds \$10,000. The

amount to be reserved must be computed using a formula based upon estimated remaining useful life and estimated replacement cost or deferred maintenance expense of the reserve item. In a budget adopted by an association that is required to obtain a structural integrity reserve study, reserves must be maintained for the items identified in paragraph (g) for which the association is responsible pursuant to the declaration of condominium, and the reserve amount for such items must be based on the findings and recommendations of the association's most recent structural integrity reserve study. With respect to items for which an estimate of useful life is not readily ascertainable or with an estimated remaining useful life of greater than 25 years, an association is not required to reserve replacement costs for such items, but an association must reserve the amount of deferred maintenance expense, if any, which is recommended by the structural integrity reserve study for such items. The association may adjust replacement reserve assessments annually to take into account an inflation adjustment and any changes in estimates or extension of the useful life of a reserve item caused by deferred maintenance. The members of a unit-owner-controlled association may determine, by a majority vote of the total voting interests of the association, to provide no reserves or less reserves than required by this subsection. For a budget adopted on or after December 31, 2024, the members of a unit-owner-controlled association that must obtain a structural integrity reserve study may not determine to provide no reserves or less reserves than required by this subsection for items listed in paragraph (g), except that members of an association operating a multicondominium may determine to provide no reserves or less reserves than required by this subsection if an alternative funding method has been approved by the division. If the local building official, as defined in s. 468.603, determines that the entire condominium building is uninhabitable due to a natural emergency, as defined in s. 252.34, the board, upon the approval of a majority of its members, may pause the contribution to its reserves or reduce reserve funding until the local building official determines that the condominium building is habitable. Any reserve account funds held by the association may be expended, pursuant to the board's determination, to make the condominium building and its structures habitable. Upon the determination by the local building official that the condominium building is habitable, the association must immediately resume contributing funds to its reserves.

b. Before turnover of control of an association by a developer to unit owners other than a developer under s. 718.301, the developer-controlled association may not vote to waive the reserves or reduce funding of the reserves. If a meeting of the unit owners has been called to determine whether to waive or reduce the funding of reserves and no such result is achieved or a quorum is not attained, the reserves included in the budget shall go into

effect. After the turnover, the developer may vote its voting interest to waive or reduce the funding of reserves.

3. Reserve funds and any interest accruing thereon shall remain in the reserve account or accounts, and may be used only for authorized reserve expenditures unless their use for other purposes is approved in advance by a majority vote of all the total voting interests of the association. Before turnover of control of an association by a developer to unit owners other than the developer pursuant to s. 718.301, the developer-controlled association may not vote to use reserves for purposes other than those for which they were intended. For a budget adopted on or after December 31, 2024, members of a unit-owner-controlled association that must obtain a structural integrity reserve study may not vote to use reserve funds, or any interest accruing thereon, for any other purpose other than the replacement or deferred maintenance costs of the components listed in paragraph (g).

4. The only voting interests that are eligible to vote on questions that involve waiving or reducing the funding of reserves, or using existing reserve funds for purposes other than purposes for which the reserves were intended, are the voting interests of the units subject to assessment to fund the reserves in question. Proxy questions relating to waiving or reducing the funding of reserves or using existing reserve funds for purposes other than purposes for which the reserves were intended must contain the following statement in capitalized, bold letters in a font size larger than any other used on the face of the proxy ballot: **WAIVING OF RESERVES, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, OR ALLOWING ALTERNATIVE USES OF EXISTING RESERVES MAY RESULT IN UNIT OWNER LIABILITY FOR PAYMENT OF UNANTICIPATED SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS REGARDING THOSE ITEMS.**

(g) Structural integrity reserve study.—

1. A residential condominium association must have a structural integrity reserve study completed at least every 10 years after the condominium's creation for each building on the condominium property that is three stories or higher in height, as determined by the Florida Building Code, which includes, at a minimum, a study of the following items as related to the structural integrity and safety of the building:

- a. Roof.
- b. Structure, including load-bearing walls and other primary structural members and primary structural systems as those terms are defined in s. 627.706.
- c. Fireproofing and fire protection systems.
- d. Plumbing.
- e. Electrical systems.

f. Waterproofing and exterior painting.

g. Windows and exterior doors.

h. Any other item that has a deferred maintenance expense or replacement cost that exceeds \$10,000 and the failure to replace or maintain such item negatively affects the items listed in sub-subparagraphs a.-g., as determined by the visual inspection portion of the structural integrity reserve study.

2. A structural integrity reserve study is based on a visual inspection of the condominium property. A structural integrity reserve study may be performed by any person qualified to perform such study. However, the visual inspection portion of the structural integrity reserve study must be performed or verified by an engineer licensed under chapter 471, an architect licensed under chapter 481, or a person certified as a reserve specialist or professional reserve analyst by the Community Associations Institute or the Association of Professional Reserve Analysts.

3. At a minimum, a structural integrity reserve study must identify each item of the condominium property being visually inspected, state the estimated remaining useful life and the estimated replacement cost or deferred maintenance expense of each item of the condominium property being visually inspected, and provide a reserve funding schedule with a recommended annual reserve amount that achieves the estimated replacement cost or deferred maintenance expense of each item of condominium property being visually inspected by the end of the estimated remaining useful life of the item.

The structural integrity reserve study may recommend that reserves do not need to be maintained for any item for which an estimate of useful life and an estimate of replacement cost cannot be determined, or the study may recommend a deferred maintenance expense amount for such item. The structural integrity reserve study may recommend that reserves for replacement costs do not need to be maintained for any item with an estimated remaining useful life of greater than 25 years, but the study may recommend a deferred maintenance expense amount for such item.

4. This paragraph does not apply to buildings less than three stories in height; single-family, two-family, or three-family dwellings with three or fewer habitable stories above ground; any portion or component of a building that has not been submitted to the condominium form of ownership; or any portion or component of a building that is maintained by a party other than the association.

5. Before a developer turns over control of an association to unit owners other than the developer, the developer must have a turnover inspection report in compliance with

s. 718.301(4)(p) and (q) for each building on the condominium property that is three stories or higher in height.

6. Associations existing on or before July 1, 2022, which are controlled by unit owners other than the developer, must have a structural integrity reserve study completed by December 31, 2024, for each building on the condominium property that is three stories or higher in height. An association that is required to complete a milestone inspection in accordance with s. 553.899 on or before December 31, 2026, may complete the structural integrity reserve study simultaneously with the milestone inspection. In no event may the structural integrity reserve study be completed after December 31, 2026.

7. If the milestone inspection required by s. 553.899, or an inspection completed for a similar local requirement, was performed within the past 5 years and meets the requirements of this paragraph, such inspection may be used in place of the visual inspection portion of the structural integrity reserve study.

8. If the officers or directors of an association willfully and knowingly fail to complete a structural integrity reserve study pursuant to this paragraph, such failure is a breach of an officer's and director's fiduciary relationship to the unit owners under s. 718.111(1).

9. Within 45 days after receiving the structural integrity reserve study, the association must distribute a copy of the study to each unit owner or deliver to each unit owner a notice that the completed study is available for inspection and copying upon a written request. Distribution of a copy of the study or notice must be made by United States mail or personal delivery to the mailing address, property address, or any other address of the owner provided to fulfill the association's notice requirements under this chapter, or by electronic transmission to the e-mail address or facsimile number provided to fulfill the association's notice requirements to unit owners who previously consented to receive notice by electronic transmission.

10. Within 45 days after receiving the structural integrity reserve study, the association must provide the division with a statement indicating that the study was completed and that the association provided or made available such study to each unit owner in accordance with this section. The statement must be provided to the division in the manner established by the division using a form posted on the division's website.

(h) *Mandatory milestone inspections.*—If an association is required to have a milestone inspection performed pursuant to s. 553.899, the association must arrange for the milestone inspection to be performed and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of s. 553.899. The association is responsible for all costs associated with the milestone inspection attributable to the portions of the building which the association is

responsible for maintaining under the governing documents of the association. If the officers or directors of an association willfully and knowingly fail to have a milestone inspection performed pursuant to s. 553.899, such failure is a breach of the officers' and directors' fiduciary relationship to the unit owners under s. 718.111(1)(a). Within 14 days after receipt of a written notice from the local enforcement agency that a milestone inspection is required, the association must notify the unit owners of the required milestone inspection and provide the date by which the milestone inspection must be completed. Such notice may be given by electronic submission to unit owners who consent to receive notice by electronic submission or by posting on the association's website. Within 45 days after receiving a phase one or phase two milestone inspection report from the architect or engineer who performed the inspection, the association must distribute a copy of the inspector-prepared summary of the inspection report to each unit owner, regardless of the findings or recommendations in the report, by United States mail or personal delivery at the mailing address, property address, or any other address of the owner provided to fulfill the association's notice requirements under this chapter and by electronic transmission to the e-mail address or facsimile number provided to fulfill the association's notice requirements to unit owners who previously consented to receive notice by electronic transmission; must post a copy of the inspector-prepared summary in a conspicuous place on the condominium property; and must publish the full report and inspector-prepared summary on the association's website, if the association is required to have a website.

(i) *Assessments.*—The manner of collecting from the unit owners their shares of the common expenses shall be stated in the bylaws. Assessments shall be made against units not less frequently than quarterly in an amount which is not less than that required to provide funds in advance for payment of all of the anticipated current operating expenses and for all of the unpaid operating expenses previously incurred. Nothing in this paragraph shall preclude the right of an association to accelerate assessments of an owner delinquent in payment of common expenses. Accelerated assessments shall be due and payable on the date the claim of lien is filed. Such accelerated assessments shall include the amounts due for the remainder of the budget year in which the claim of lien was filed.