

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS**

**BILL #:** HB 7131 PCB ENVR 06-02 Brownfields  
**SPONSOR(S):** Environmental Regulation Committee  
**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
Orig. Comm.: Environmental Regulation Committee	5 Y, 0 N	Kliner	Kliner
1) _____	_____	_____	_____
2) _____	_____	_____	_____
3) _____	_____	_____	_____
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5) _____	_____	_____	_____

**SUMMARY ANALYSIS**

This bill amends various provisions of the Florida Brownfield Redevelopment Act.

Specifically, the bill:

- Increases the amount of credit, from 35 percent to 50 percent, that may be applied against intangible personal property tax and corporate income tax for the voluntary cleanup costs of a contaminated brownfield or dry-cleaning site, and increases the amount of tax credit that may be granted to a tax credit applicant per year from \$250,000 to \$500,000;
- Increases the percentage and amount of tax credit that may be received by the taxpayer in the final year of the cleanup as an incentive to complete the cleanup. The percentage is increased from 10 percent to 25 percent and the amount is increased from \$50,000 to \$500,000;
- Expands the Voluntary Cleanup Tax Credit program to provide incentives for cleaning unlicensed, or promiscuous solid waste dumpsites;
- Requires Enterprise Florida, Inc., to aggressively market brownfields;
- Increases the amount of the brownfields loan guarantee from 10 to 25 percent; and,
- Repeals the Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance Program and the Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance Revolving Loan Trust Fund;

Fiscal Impact: The state may experience an indeterminate loss of tax revenues associated with the increased caps and the 15% increase in tax credits for amounts it otherwise would have collected for intangible personal tax and corporate income tax.

## FULL ANALYSIS

### I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

#### A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

**Provide Limited Government:** The bill increases tax credit provisions which will create additional incentives for voluntary cleanup of eligible contaminated sites. Increased participation in the state's Brownfields Redevelopment Program and the voluntary cleanup of eligible drycleaning sites will reduce trust fund expenditures, accelerate cleanup and redevelopment of these contaminated sites and have a positive impact on local communities as these properties begin to create new tax revenue.

**Ensure Lower Taxes:** The bill provides an increase for the percentage of costs of voluntary cleanup activity from 35 percent to 50 percent when obtaining a tax credit against intangible personal property tax or corporate income tax. The bill increases the percentage and amount of tax credit that may be received by the taxpayer in the final year of the cleanup as an incentive to complete the cleanup. The percentage is increased from 10 percent to 25 percent and the amount is increased from \$50,000 to \$500,000

**Safeguard Individual Liberty and Promote Personal Responsibility:** The bill provides an increase for the percentage of costs of voluntary cleanup activity from 35 percent to 50 percent when obtaining a tax credit against intangible personal property tax or corporate income tax and increases the dollar cap on the 10 percent completion incentive tax credit from \$50,000 to \$500,000. These provisions may result in increased participation in the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program and voluntary cleanup of drycleaning solvent contaminated sites.

#### B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

##### **Current Situation**

In 1995, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated a program to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and reuse brownfields. Florida followed suit in 1997 and enacted the Brownfields Redevelopment Act to provide incentives for the private sector to redevelop abandoned or underused real property, the development of which was complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

The federal brownfields program was significantly expanded on January 11, 2002, when President Bush signed into law the Small Business Relief and Liability and Brownfields Revitalization Act, also known as the "Brownfields Amendments." The main purpose of this new law was to create incentives for the redevelopment of brownfield properties and Superfund sites and provide grants to assess or cleanup a brownfields property.

The Florida Brownfield Redevelopment Act, consisting of ss. 376.77-376.85, F.S., provides legislative intent, a brownfield area designation process, environmental cleanup criteria, program eligibility and liability protections, and economic and financial incentives. Furthermore, s. 376.86, F.S., provides for a Brownfield Areas Loan Guarantee Program, and ss. 376.87 and 376.875, F.S., provide for brownfield property ownership clearance assistance and the creation of the Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance Revolving Loan Trust Fund.

##### **Legislative intent**

As provided in s. 376.78, F.S., the Legislature declared that the reduction of public health and environmental hazards on existing commercial and industrial sites is vital to their use and reuse as sources of employment.

Designation and administration—Designation of a brownfield area must come from the local government through the passage of a local resolution. Once a brownfield area has been designated, the local government must notify the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and attach a map or a detailed legal description of the brownfield area. The designation of a brownfield area may be initiated in one of two ways:

- By a local government to encourage redevelopment of an area of specific interest to the community; or
- By an individual with a redevelopment plan in mind.

In determining the area to be designated, the local government must consider:

- Whether the brownfield area warrants economic development and has a reasonable potential for such activities;
- Whether the proposed area to be designated represents a reasonable focused approach and is not overly large in geographic coverage;
- Whether the area has potential to interest the private sector in participating in rehabilitation; and
- Whether the area contains sites or parts of sites suitable for limited recreational open space, cultural, or historical preservation purposes. See, Section 376.80(2), F.S.

A local government shall designate a brownfield area if:

- The person who owns or controls a potential brownfield site is requesting the designation and has agreed to rehabilitate the site;
- The redevelopment and rehabilitation of the proposed brownfield site will result in economic productivity of the area and will create at least 10 new permanent jobs at the brownfield site;<sup>1</sup>
- The redevelopment of the proposed brownfield site is consistent with the local comprehensive plan and is a permissible use under the applicable local land development regulations;
- Notice has been provided to neighbors and nearby residents of the proposed area to be designated; and
- The person proposing the area for designation has provided reasonable assurance that there are sufficient financial resources to implement and complete the rehabilitation agreement and redevelopment plan.

The designation of a brownfield area and the identification of a person responsible for brownfield site rehabilitation simply entitle the identified person to negotiate a brownfield site rehabilitation agreement with the DEP or an approved local program. The person responsible for rehabilitation must enter into a brownfield site rehabilitation agreement with the DEP or an approved local program to be eligible for certain benefits associated with the brownfields redevelopment program. As of February 1, 2006, there were 125 designated brownfield areas in Florida. According to information reported by the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development to the DEP in January 2006, the cumulative totals for new job creation and capital investment attributable to the Brownfields Redevelopment program from inception of the program until December 31, 2005 are: 6,656 new direct jobs, 5,935 new indirect jobs, and \$546,913,933 of capital investment in designated brownfields areas.

### **Cleanup criteria**

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<sup>1</sup> As specified in s. 376.80(2)(b), F.S., the 10 new permanent jobs may be full- or part-time and cannot be associated with the rehabilitation agreement or redevelopment project demolition or construction activities.

Risk-based corrective-action principles apply, to the maximum extent feasible, to the cleanup activities on a brownfield site within a designated brownfield area. These principles are designed to achieve protection of human health and safety and the environment in a cost-effective manner by taking into account natural attenuation, individual site characteristics, and the use of engineering and institutional controls.

### **Eligibility and liability protection**

A person who has not caused or contributed to the contamination of a brownfield site on or after July 1, 1997, is eligible to participate in the brownfield program. Certain specified sites are not eligible for the program. Those sites include brownfield sites that are subject to an ongoing formal judicial or administrative enforcement action or corrective action pursuant to federal authority, or sites that have obtained or are required to obtain a hazardous waste operation, storage, or disposal facility permit, unless specifically exempted by a memorandum of agreement with the EPA.

After July 1, 1997, petroleum and drycleaning contamination sites in a brownfield area cannot receive both funding assistance for the cleanup of the discharge that is available under the underground storage tank cleanup program or the drycleaning cleanup program and any state assistance available under s. 288.107, F.S., relating to brownfield redevelopment bonus refunds.

If a state or local government has acquired a contaminated site within a brownfield area, it is not liable for implementing site rehabilitation corrective actions, unless the state or local government has caused or contributed to a release of contaminants at the brownfield site. Also, nonprofit conservation organizations, acting for the public interest, which purchase contaminated sites and which did not contribute to the release of contamination on the site also warrant protection from liability.

Lenders are afforded certain liability protections to encourage financing of real property in brownfield areas. Essentially, the same liability protections apply to lenders if they have not caused or contributed to a release of a contaminant at the brownfield site.

### **Economic and financial incentives**

Since the Brownfields Redevelopment Act was envisioned to emphasize economic redevelopment, local governments were expected to play a significant role in the process. As a result, state and local governments are encouraged to offer redevelopment incentives which may include financial, regulatory, and technical assistance. Other economic and financial incentives available to brownfield sites are tax refunds for qualified target industries located in a brownfield area, brownfield redevelopment bonus refunds, and partial voluntary cleanup tax credits.

The tax refunds available may be for corporate income taxes, insurance premium taxes, sales and use taxes, intangible personal property taxes, emergency excise taxes, documentary stamp taxes, and ad valorem taxes.

The brownfield redevelopment bonus refunds of \$2,500 are available to any qualified target industry business for each new Florida job created in a brownfield area which is claimed on the qualified target industry's annual refund claim. Section 288.107, F.S., provides the minimum criteria for participation in the brownfield redevelopment bonus refund program.

### **Voluntary cleanup tax credit**

One of the financial incentives that is getting increased attention as the brownfield program matures and gains in popularity is the voluntary cleanup tax credit or VCTC. This is a tax credit available for site rehabilitation conducted at eligible drycleaning sites and brownfield sites in designated brownfield areas. To be eligible, the responsible party must execute a Brownfield Site Rehabilitation Agreement with the DEP.

The VCTC can apply toward either the intangible personal property tax or the corporate income tax. The amount of the credit is 35 percent of the costs of the voluntary cleanup activity that is integral to site rehabilitation. The maximum amount for a tax credit applicant is \$250,000 per year. If the credit is not fully used in any one year because of insufficient tax liability on the part of the tax credit applicant, the unused amount may be carried forward for a period not to exceed 5 years. However, the total amount of the tax credit that may be granted each year under the program is \$2 million. To date, however, the total amount of applications for the tax credits has not reached the \$2 million cap in any one year. DEP reports that from creation of the tax credit program in 1998 through FY 02-03, the total value of tax credits issued annually has nearly doubled each year. A total of \$3,867,638 in tax credits have been issued since its inception in 1998. Of the total amount of tax credits issued, \$3,098,752 (80 percent) has been issued for brownfield sites and \$768,886 (20 percent) has been issued for drycleaning solvent cleanup sites. Table A below, illustrates the fiscal year history associated with the voluntary tax credit program administered by DEP:

**Table A**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b># Voluntary Cleanup Tax Credit Certificates Issued</b>	<b>Total \$ Issued</b>
FY 1998-1999	1	\$30,228.13
FY 1999-2000	3	\$118,438.25
FY 2000-2001	6	\$213,851.71
FY 2001-2002	9	\$494,193.72
FY 2002-2003	13	\$1,068,049.29
FY 2003-2004	16	\$1,014,834.47
FY 2004-2005	10	\$928,042.19
FY 2005-2006	9	\$1,010,086.10

As an inducement to complete the voluntary cleanup, the tax credit applicant may claim an additional 10 per cent of the total cleanup costs, not to exceed \$50,000 in the final year of cleanup. The tax credits may be transferred once to another entity in whole or in units of not less than 25 percent of the remaining credit.

According to industry representatives and the DEP, there are brownfield sites that are impacted by solid waste; however, due to a lack of "contamination" as defined by statute and rule the DEP lacks authorization to award tax credits associated with the solid waste cleanup.

### **Brownfield Areas Loan Guarantee Program**

The Brownfield Areas Loan Guarantee Program was created in 1998. A Brownfield Areas Loan Guarantee Council was created to review, approve, or deny certain partnership agreements with local governments, financial institutions, and others associated with the redevelopment of brownfields for limited guarantees of loans or loss reserves. A loan guarantee may only be for a period of not more than 5 years.

The limited state loan guarantee applies to 10 percent of the primary lender's loans for redevelopment projects in brownfields areas. The loan guarantee holds until permanent financing is acquired or until the project is sold. Section 376.86, F.S., provides that no more than \$5 million of the balance of the Inland Protection Trust Fund in any fiscal year may be at risk at any time on loan guarantees or as loan loss reserves. To date, the loan guarantee provisions have been used only one time. That project involved a shopping center and an out-parcel in a Clearwater brownfield area. The loan guarantee mechanism worked as it was designed to do. With the loan guarantee, the developer has more financial flexibility because the initial cash flow is not as great.

### **Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance and Revolving Loans Trust Fund**

Section 376.87, F.S., provides for brownfield property ownership clearance assistance. The Legislature recognized that some brownfield redevelopment projects are more difficult to redevelop due to the existence of various types of liens on the property and complications from previous ownership having declared bankruptcy. The Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance Revolving Loan Trust Fund was created to assist in the early stages of redeveloping brownfields by helping to clear prior liens on the property through a negotiated process. The loans would be repaid in later years from the resale of the brownfield properties following site rehabilitation and other activities that will enhance the property's ultimate value. This trust fund has never been capitalized and used for its intended purposes.

### **Enterprise Florida, Inc.:**

Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) is the public-private partnership responsible for leading Florida's statewide economic development efforts. EFI was formed in July 1996, when Florida became the first state in the nation to replace its Commerce Department with a public-private organization that is responsible for economic development, international trade and statewide business marketing. EFI's mission is to diversify Florida's economy and create better-paying jobs for its citizens by supporting, attracting and helping to create businesses in innovative, high-growth industries.<sup>2</sup> Currently, brownfields are not included in the types of communities that EFI is required to aggressively assist in economic development and job growth.

### **Effect of Proposed Changes**

- Increases the amount of credit, from 35 percent to 50 percent, that may be applied against intangible personal property tax and corporate income tax for the voluntary cleanup costs of a contaminated brownfield or dry-cleaning site, and increases the amount of tax credit that may be granted to a tax credit applicant per year from \$250,000 to \$500,000;
- Increases the percentage and amount of tax credit that may be received by the taxpayer in the final year of the cleanup as an incentive to complete the cleanup. The percentage is increased from 10 percent to 25 percent and the amount is increased from \$50,000 to \$500,000;
- Expands the Voluntary Cleanup Tax Credit program to provide incentives for cleaning unlicensed, or historic solid waste dumpsites;
- Requires Enterprise Florida, Inc., to aggressively market brownfields;
- Increases the amount of the brownfields loan guarantee from 10 to 25 percent; and,
- Repeals the Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance Program and the Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance Revolving Loan Trust Fund;

### **C. SECTION DIRECTORY:**

Sections 1, 2, and 3. Sections 199.1055, 220.1845, and 376.30781, F.S., are amended to increase the tax credit that is available against either the intangible personal property tax or the corporate income tax for costs incurred for voluntary cleanup activity integral to site rehabilitation from 35 percent to 50 percent. Also, the amount of tax credit that may be granted to a tax credit applicant per year is increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000.

To encourage completion of site rehabilitation at contaminated sites being voluntarily cleaned up, current law allows the applicant to claim an additional 10 percent of the total cleanup costs in the final year of cleanup up to \$50,000. These sections are amended to increase the percentage to 25 percent and the maximum amount from \$50,000 to \$500,000. The total amount of the tax credit that may be granted annually is increased from \$2 million to \$5 million.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.eflorida.com/aboutus/default.asp?tn=3>

Section 4. Part VII of ch. 288, F.S., creates Enterprise Florida, Inc., as the principle economic development organization for the state. It is Enterprise Florida, Inc.'s responsibility to aggressively market Florida's rural communities, distressed urban communities, and enterprise zones as locations for potential new investment, to aggressively assist these communities in the identification and development of new economic opportunities for job creation, and to fully market state incentive programs such as the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program and the Quick Action Closing Fund in economically distressed areas. This section amends s. 288.9015, F.S., to require Enterprise Florida, Inc., to aggressively market brownfields as locations for potential new investment.

Section 5. This section amends s. 376.86, F.S., to increase the amount of the Brownfield Areas Loan Guarantee from 10 percent to 25 percent.

Section 6. This section repeals ss. 376.87 and 376.875, F.S., which relate to the brownfield property ownership clearance assistance program and the Brownfield Property Ownership Clearance Assistance Revolving Loan Trust Fund. This program has never been capitalized and used for its intended purposes.

Section 7. This section provides an effective date of July 1, 2006

## II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

### A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

#### 1. Revenues:

The state may experience a loss of tax revenues associated with the increased caps and the 15% increase in tax credits for amounts it otherwise would have collected for intangible personal tax and corporate income tax.

#### 2. Expenditures:

##### a. Non-recurring Effects:

The bill will require DEP to amend an existing rule detailing the tax credit application process. There will be indeterminate fiscal impacts associated with the cost of rulemaking related to publishing rule drafts and conducting public workshops for rule development.

##### b. Recurring Effects:      None.

### B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

#### 1. Revenues:

Unknown. Local governments may benefit from the satisfaction of tax liens and the replacement of properties onto local tax rolls as redevelopment occurs on brownfield areas.

#### 2. Expenditures:

##### a. Non-recurring Effects:

Local governments should not have significant incidental costs associated with implementation of the amendments to the brownfields program.

##### b. Recurring Effects:

Local governments may benefit from the cleanup of brownfield sites and drycleaning solvent contaminated sites and may see an increased demand for passage of resolutions designating brownfield areas.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill increases the amount of credit, from 35 percent to 50 percent, that may be applied against intangible personal property tax and corporate income tax for the voluntary cleanup costs of a contaminated brownfield or dry-cleaning site, and increases the completion incentive cap from 10 percent to 25 percent. The amount of tax credit that may be granted to a tax credit applicant per year is increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000. These changes may result in increased participation in the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program and in voluntary cleanup of drycleaning solvent contaminated sites. Direct benefits may include employment opportunities for environmental cleanup contractors, future job opportunities for area residents, opportunity for developers to realize profits on property investments, the possibility of an increase in surrounding property value, and a reduction or elimination of risk to public health and the environment resulting from cleaning up contamination in the area.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None

### III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable because this bill does not appear to: require cities or counties to spend funds or take actions requiring the expenditure of funds; reduce the authority that cities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with cities or counties

2. Other:

None

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill will require DEP to amend an existing rule detailing the tax credit application process.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None

### IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES

None