

This bill amends section 601.15, Florida Statutes.

This bill repeals section 601.154, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Under the Florida Government Accountability Act (ss. 11.901-920, F.S.), most state agencies and their respective advisory committees are subject to a “sunset” review process to determine whether the agency should be retained, modified, or abolished. The act requires a review of Department of Citrus, including the Florida Citrus Commission, and its advisory committees by July 1, 2008.

The citrus industry is a significant part of Florida’s economy that continues to increase in production value. Between 1950 and 2000, the inflation-adjusted production value for all Florida citrus grew from \$393.5 million to \$1.3 billion in 2006 dollars.

State regulation of the citrus industry was initiated in 1935 with the passage of ch. 16854 and 16863, L.O.F. The Legislature determined in these acts that the exercise of police power was needed to stabilize and protect the citrus industry which was a major agricultural enterprise in Florida. These acts established the Florida Citrus Commission (commission) to promulgate citrus industry regulations. Further, the commission has general supervisory authority over the department.

The department was established by ss. 20.29 and 601.05, F.S. As provided by s. 601.10, F.S., the department is authorized to promulgate rules, employ staff, expend and invest funds, collect and disseminate information, and contract with private entities in order to carry out the requirements of the Florida Citrus Code (ch. 601.F.S.).

The Senate Agriculture Committee is the primary sunset review committee for the Florida Department of Citrus. As a result of its review, the committee issued the Florida Department of Citrus Agency Sunset Review Interim Report 2008-203. The report includes the following recommendations.

- The Legislature should retain the department.
- The Legislature should give consideration to eliminating the School Marketing Program Administrative Committee.
- The department should build upon its opportunity to establish a new dialogue with citrus growers to enhance the industry and clearly define the role of the department.
- The citrus industry should collectively agree upon a preferred approach by refining the options before it, such as petitioning the federal government to allocate a portion of the duties paid on imported juice to supplement grower funded promotions, and evaluating the feasibility of establishing a federal research and promotion program for orange juice.
- Research into citrus disease cures and controls, as well as abscission methods and mechanical harvesting should be continued and enhanced.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill reenacts the sections of the statutes that create and establish the Department of Citrus and the Florida Citrus Commission.

The bill repeals the Citrus Stabilization Act (601.154, F.S.) and thereby the School Marketing Program Administrative Committee, which was formed under the authority of the act in 1972. The committee has not been utilized recently and all available funds were expended by the close of Fiscal Year 2006-2007. Through a series of statutory changes over the years, authority to market and promote Florida citrus products in ways contemplated by the Citrus Stabilization Act, as well as the authority to budget, tax, and make expenditures for these purposes, is provided by the more broadly encompassing s. 601.15, F.S.

The bill changes the date by which the Citrus Commission sets the tax rate for the season from “prior to August 1” to “prior to November 1” of each year. This change makes it possible for the Citrus Commission to set the citrus tax rate based upon the first official U.S.D.A. crop estimate of each season.

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Agriculture on March 27, 2008:

The committee substitute changes the date by which the Citrus Commission sets the tax rate for the season from “prior to August 1” to “prior to November 1” of each year. This change makes it possible for the Citrus Commission to set the citrus tax rate based upon the first official U.S.D.A. crop estimate of each season.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.