

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** HB 901 Household Moving Services

**SPONSOR(S):** Horner and others

**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 296

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Business & Consumer Affairs Subcommittee	14 Y, 0 N	Morton	Creamer
2) Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) Economic Affairs Committee			

### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill reduces the regulatory requirements for intrastate movers. Specifically the bill:

- Extends the renewal cycle of intrastate mover registration from annually to biennially.
- Removes requirements for movers and moving brokers to obtain local licensing and pre-empts any applicable local regulation not enacted before January 1, 2011. Pre-existing local registration fees must be reasonable and may not exceed the cost of administering the regulation.
- Allows a mover to exclude liability for goods packed by the shipper, if the exclusion is disclosed and the shipper declines to allow the mover to open and inspect the packed goods.
- Allows a mover to refuse to transport or ship any goods, if it refuses to do so before transporting or shipping the goods and the shipper is notified and acknowledges the refusal in writing.

The bill has a revenue neutral impact on state trust funds from the extension of the renewal period.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2011.

# FULL ANALYSIS

## I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

#### Current Situation

Chapter 507, F.S., establishes registration, insurance and contractual requirements for intrastate movers.

“Mover” is defined as “a person who, for compensation, loads, transports or ships, or unloads household goods as part of a household move.” “Moving Broker” is defined as “a person who, for compensation, arranges for another person to load, transport or ship, or unload household goods as part of a household move or who, for compensation, refers a shipper to a mover.”

Intrastate movers and moving brokers must register with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs (DACS) and pay an annual fee of \$300.

Annual registration requires disclosure of contact information and copies of contracts offered to the public. Movers and moving brokers must maintain liability insurance or post a \$25,000 security. Movers must also maintain motor vehicle insurance, including combined bodily injury and property damage liability coverage in varying amounts.

The DACS has the authority to enforce the chapter by seeking civil or administrative remedies. Violations of the chapter are also deemed unfair or deceptive trade practices, triggering enforcement by the state attorney or Department of Legal Affairs. Certain prohibited acts also subject movers to criminal penalties.<sup>1</sup>

A mover that lawfully fails to relinquish a shipper’s household goods may place the goods in storage until payment is tendered. ‘Storage’ is defined as “the warehousing of a shipper’s goods while under the care, custody, and control of the mover.”

A mover may not limit its liability for the loss or damage of household goods to a valuation rate that is less than 60 cents per pound per article. It must disclose any limitation and may offer valuation coverage to compensate the shipper in the event of loss or damage. If a mover offers valuation coverage, the coverage must indemnify the shipper for at least the minimum valuation rate.

#### *Local regulation*

Section 507.13, F.S., allows for local regulation and cooperative agreements between the DACS and local governments for enforcement. Currently, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Pinellas Counties have relevant local ordinances.<sup>2</sup>

#### Proposed Changes

The bill extends the renewal cycle of intrastate mover registration from annually to biennially. The registration fee would still be calculated as \$300 per year.

The bill removes requirements for movers and moving brokers to obtain local licensing and pre-empts any applicable local regulation not enacted before January 1, 2011. Local governments may still levy local business taxes. Pre-existing local registration fees must be reasonable and may not exceed the cost of administering the regulation. Pre-existing local registration or bonding requirements may only be applied to movers and moving brokers whose principal place of business is within that county’s jurisdiction.

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 507.11, F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Miami-Dade County, Sec. 8A-325; Palm Beach County Ordinance NO. 2005-007; Pinellas County, Sec. 42-357; Broward County Moving Ordinance sec. 20-176.90 et seq.

The bill allows a mover to exclude liability for household goods packed by the shipper, if the exclusion is disclosed and the shipper declines, in writing, to allow the mover to open and inspect the goods packed by the shipper.

The bill allows a mover to refuse to transport or ship any goods, if it refuses to do so before transporting or shipping the goods and the shipper is notified and acknowledges the refusal in writing.

The bill limits the definition of 'storage' to include only temporary warehousing.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2011.

**B. SECTION DIRECTORY:**

Section 1 amends s. 507.01, F.S., to redefine the term "storage."

Section 2 amends s. 507.03, F.S., to provide for the biennial renewal of mover and moving broker registrations.

Section 3 amends s. 507.04, F.S., to authorize a mover to exclude liability for household goods packed by the shipper under certain circumstances

Section 4 amends s. 507.06, F.S., to authorize a mover to refuse to transport or ship household goods under certain circumstances

Section 5 amends s. 507.07, F.S., conforms changes to the renewal cycle.

Section 6 amends s. 507.13, F.S., to preempt new local ordinances and regulations.

Section 7 provides an effective date.

**II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

**A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:**

1. Revenues:

The bill has a revenue neutral impact on state trust funds from the extension of the renewal period.

2. Expenditures:

None.

**B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. Revenues:

To the extent that current local fees under local regulation enacted before January 1, 2011, are unreasonable or exceed the cost of administering the regulation, local governments could see a decrease in revenues caused by lowering those fees to be reasonable and in line with the cost of regulation.

2. Expenditures:

None.

**C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:**

Intrastate movers will be able to register biennially, rather than annually. Applicable fees would not change. Movers may see a reduction in the cost of local regulation.

Under certain circumstances, movers may be able to avoid liability for damage to goods packed by shippers.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill has a revenue neutral impact on state trust funds from the extension of the renewal period.

**III. COMMENTS**

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. The bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to spend funds or take an action requiring the expenditure of funds; reduce the authority that the counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

**IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES**

None.