

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Commerce and Tourism Committee

BILL: SB 266

INTRODUCER: Senator Lynn

SUBJECT: State Symbols/Automobile Racing

DATE: February 16, 2011

REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|---------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. | Tell | Hrdlicka | CM | Pre-meeting |
| 2. | | | GO | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |

I. Summary:

SB 266 provides for the designation of the sport of automobile racing as the official state sport. This bill creates s. 15.0527, F.S.

II. Present Situation:

Automobile racing in Florida has a long and storied history stretching back more than 100 years. In April 1902, the first “tests of speed” began on the 12-mile stretch of beach between Ormond and Daytona. News quickly spread, and by March 1903, hundreds of guests, reporters, and race drivers filled the Ormond Hotel for the first official races. These races were sponsored by the American Automobile Association. Interestingly, due to the scarcity of roads in Florida, automobiles from the north were shipped down by Henry Flagler’s railroad line.¹

The 1903-1910 period of racing not only served to boost local spirits, but also provided the Ormond-Daytona area the opportunity to grow its tourism sector. This economic growth from tourism came primarily from racing enthusiast northerners who had come to vacation and view the racing events. During this era, Ormond-Daytona gained a national reputation as “a mecca for motor enthusiasts” because five world speed records were broken within a short 7-year span.²

After 1910, automobile racing reached wide-spread appeal and automobile racing tracks were constructed in other prominent southern cities such as Savannah, Atlanta, New Orleans,

¹ Randall L. Hall, *Automobile Racing in the South*, The Journal of Southern History, (August 2002).

² Alice Strickland, *Florida’s Golden Age of Racing*, Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol 45, No. 3 (January 1967).

Louisville, and Montgomery. However, the Ormond-Daytona strip maintained its established place in the racing world.³

In late 1947, under the leadership of Bill France and Bill Tuthill, a group of racing promoters gathered to meet in Daytona Beach. They sought to create an organization which would unify automobile racers and build back interest in the sport following World War II. This meeting was the impetus for the incorporation of the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) in 1948.⁴

Today, NASCAR is automobile racing's largest sanctioning body for stock cars. Currently, NASCAR has 28 sanctioned tracks. Additionally, Florida is one of only three states that have two NASCAR-sanctioned tracks. These tracks are the Daytona International Speedway and the Homestead-Miami Speedway.⁵

Aside from the two NASCAR-sanctioned tracks, Florida is home to an additional 50 automobile racing tracks. These tracks are located throughout the state, and provide local amateur racers and enthusiasts the opportunity to be involved with the sport.⁶

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 266 designates the sport of automobile racing as the official state sport.

Section 1 creates s. 15.0527, F.S., to designate the sport of automobile racing as the official state sport.

Section 2 provides an effective date of July 1, 2012.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

³ Hall, *supra* note 1.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Nascar Tracks. available at www.nascar.com/races/tracks/ (Last visited February 16, 2012).

⁶ Florida Race Track Directory of Asphalt & Dirt Tracks & Drag Strips available at <http://www.racingin.com/track/florida.aspx> (Last visited February 16, 2012).

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.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.