

II. Present Situation:

Division of Emergency Management

The Division of Emergency Management (Division) is administratively housed within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Division is a separate budget entity, as provided in the General Appropriations Act and must prepare and submit a budget request in accordance with chapter 216, Florida Statutes.¹ The Division is responsible for all professional, technical, and administrative support functions necessary to carry out its responsibilities. The Director of the Division is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the Governor and is the head of the Division for all purposes. The Division is tasked with administering programs to rapidly apply all available aid to communities stricken by an emergency and serves as a liaison with federal agencies and other public and private agencies.²

The State Emergency Management Act³ establishes the powers of the Division. It tasks the Division with maintaining a comprehensive statewide program of emergency management efforts that includes coordinating efforts with the Federal Government, local governments, other state agencies, school boards, and private agencies that have a role in emergency management.⁴ The statewide program of emergency management includes but is not limited to:

- Preparation of a comprehensive statewide emergency management plan;
- Adopting standards and requirements for county emergency management plans;
- Assisting political subdivisions in preparing and maintaining emergency management plans;
- Ascertaining the requirements for equipment and supplies for use in an emergency;
- Instituting statewide public awareness programs;
- Coordinating federal, state, and local emergency management activities in advance of an emergency; and
- Using and employing the property, services, and resources within the state in accordance with the Act.⁵

After a disaster, the Division conducts damage assessment surveys and advises the Governor on whether to declare an emergency and seek federal relief funds. The Division maintains a primary Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Tallahassee. The EOC serves as the communications and command center for reporting emergencies and coordinating state response activities. The Division also operates the State Warning Point, a state emergency communications center staffed 24 hours each day. The center maintains statewide communications with county emergency officials.⁶

¹ Division of Emergency Management (Executive Office of the Governor), Fiscal Year 2013-14 Base Budget Review, <http://www.flsenate.gov/UserContent/Topics/IntensiveBudgetReview/ATD/DEMBaseBudget.pdf>, last viewed March 29, 2013.

² Section 14.2016, F.S.

³ Section 252.31, F.S.

⁴ Section 252.35(1), F.S.

⁵ Section 252.35, F.S.

⁶ Florida Division of Emergency Management, Florida Disaster, http://floridadisaster.org/about_the_division.htm, last viewed March 28, 2013.

National Flood Insurance Program

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was created by Congress in 1968 as a result of passage of the National Flood Insurance Act to address economic hardships caused by flood disasters. Congress found that it was "...uneconomic for the private insurance industry alone to make flood insurance available to those in need of such protection on reasonable terms and conditions; but a program of flood insurance with large-scale participation of the Federal Government and carried out to the maximum extent practicable by the private insurance industry is feasible."⁷ In response, NFIP was created as a voluntary program that provided affordable flood insurance for people that lived in communities that adopted floodplain management regulations that meet or exceed federal standards.⁸ In most instances, homeowners buy flood policies from an insurance agent but in the event of a flood disaster the insurance company does not pay the claim, the Federal Government does. NFIP provides coverage up to \$250,000 for the home and \$100,000 for personal possessions for private dwellings⁹ and up to \$500,000 for buildings and \$500,000 for property and belongings for commercial properties.¹⁰

NFIP in Florida

- There are 459 Florida communities actively participating in NFIP;
- More than 2 million flood insurance policies; and
- More than \$471 billion in flood coverage in the state.¹¹

In March 2012, FEMA expressed concern that HB 503 (2012) was inconsistent with federal law¹² that requires communities to review proposed developments to ensure they have received necessary permits pursuant to federal and state law. This requirement ensures that coordination occurs between levels of government on projects impacting flood plains and that all necessary permits have been secured before commencement of construction. FEMA warned that if HB 503 was implemented, Florida communities would be subject to challenge and face legal impediments as they tried to comply with NFIP requirements. If communities could not meet the requirements of NFIP, they could be subject to suspension from the program that would include the following consequences:

- No selling or renewing of flood insurance policies within a community that is not in compliance with NFIP requirements;
- Federal agencies would be prohibited from issuing grants, loans, or guarantees for the acquisition or construction of structures located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA);¹³

⁷ 42 U.S.C. § 4001(b)(1,2).

⁸ 42 U.S.C. §§ 4012(c), 4022; 44 C.F.R. §§ 60.1, 60.2.

⁹ Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, Reducing Damage from Localized Flooding: A Guide for Communities, p. 11-2, <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/fima/FEMA511-12-Chapter11.pdf>, last viewed March 28, 2013.

¹⁰ *Id*

¹¹ *Id* at 1.

¹² 44 C.F.R. § 60.3(a)(2), *Id* at 1.

¹³ This restriction applies to assistance from the Federal Housing Administration, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Small Business Administration, among other Federal agencies.

- Lending institutions may require private flood insurance for high-risk properties at significantly higher cost to the homeowner, assuming private insurance is even available in that area; and
- If a flood disaster occurs in a suspended community, many types of federal disaster assistance would not be available.¹⁴

Permit Extensions

A permit extension was provided by the 2011 Florida Legislature, “in recognition of 2011 real estate market conditions,” extending “any building permit, and any permit issued by the Department of Environmental Protection or by a water management district pursuant to part IV of chapter 373, Florida Statutes, which has an expiration date from January 1, 2012, through January 1, 2014,” and also “any local government-issued development order or building permit” (including certificates of levels of service), for a period of 2 years after its previously scheduled date of expiration.¹⁵ This extension is in addition to any existing permit extension, but cannot exceed four years total.¹⁶ To get this extension, the holder of such a permit or other authorization must have notified the authorizing agency in writing by December 31, 2011.¹⁷

The 2012 Florida Legislature revised the deadline for the holder of certain permits to notify the authorizing agency of automatic extension eligibility. The new deadline was December 31, 2012.¹⁸

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 125.022, F.S., to provide that counties will attach disclaimers to development permits that include a condition that all other applicable state or federal permits must be obtained before commencement of the development.

Section 2 amends s. 166.033, F.S., to provide that municipalities will attach disclaimers to development permits that include a condition that all other applicable state or federal permits must be obtained before commencement of the development.

Section 3 revises the deadline for the holder of certain permits to notify the authorizing agency of automatic extension eligibility. The new deadline would be October 1, 2013.

Section 4 provides an effective date of July 1, 2013.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

¹⁴ *Id* at 1.

¹⁵ Section 79, ch. 2011-39, L.O.F. (HB 7207).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Section 24, ch. 2012-205, L.O.F (HB 503).

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:

The bill ensures Florida is fully compliant with NFIP and will save communities from the threat of being suspended from the program for non-compliance with NFIB standards.

If a community were to be suspended for non-compliance with NFIB, lending institutions may require private flood insurance for high-risk properties at significantly higher cost to the homeowner. If a flood disaster occurs in a suspended community, many types of federal disaster assistance for the acquisition, construction, or repair of insurable structures within a SFHA normally available to individuals and households for housing and personal property will not be available.

The bill allows the holder of certain permits more time to notify the authorizing agency of automatic extension eligibility. This may help developers who have previously expired permits who would like to keep their projects eligible in the future.

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 Community Affairs on April 9, 2013:

The committee substitute deleted a provision regarding mapped flood hazard areas. Also, the CS extended the deadline for the holder of certain permits to notify the authorizing agency of automatic extension eligibility.

B. Amendments:

None.