

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 Committee on Community Affairs

BILL: SB 594

INTRODUCER: Senator Stargel

SUBJECT: Agritourism

DATE: March 4, 2015

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Becker</u>	<u>Becker</u>	<u>AG</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u>White</u>	<u>Yeatman</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____

I. Summary:

SB 594 prohibits a local government from enforcing an ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that prohibits, restricts, regulates, or otherwise limits an agritourism activity on land classified as agricultural land.

II. Present Situation:

Agricultural Property Classification

Section 193.461, F.S., provides that each county's property appraiser shall, for assessment purposes on an annual basis, classify all lands within a county as agricultural or nonagricultural. For property to be classified as agricultural land, it must be used "primarily for bona fide agricultural purposes."¹ Agricultural purposes include, but are not limited to: horticulture; floriculture; viticulture; forestry; dairy; livestock; poultry; bee; pisciculture, when the land is used principally for the production of tropical fish; aquaculture; sod farming; and all forms of farm products and farm production.²

Property appraisers are required to reclassify lands as nonagricultural when:

- The land is diverted from an agricultural to a nonagricultural use;
- The land is no longer being utilized for agricultural purposes;
- The land has been zoned to a nonagricultural use at the request of the owner.³

A county commission may reclassify lands from agricultural to nonagricultural when there is contiguous urban or metropolitan development and the county commission finds that the

¹ Section 193.461(3)(b), F.S.

² Section 193.461(5), F.S.

³ Section 193.461(4)(a), F.S.

continued use of the lands for agricultural purposes will act as a deterrent to the timely and orderly expansion of the community.⁴

Agritourism

When farmers open their lands to the general public for the purposes of agriculture-related education and entertainment, they put their lands to a new beneficial use that may increase their farms' economic viability.⁵ Responding to concerns over local regulation and burdensome liability, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation in 2013 to define and encourage agritourism.⁶ Section 570.86(1), F.S., defines "agritourism activity" as:

any agricultural related activity consistent with a bona fide farm or ranch or in a working forest which allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy activities, including farming, ranching, historical, cultural, or harvest-your-own activities and attractions.

Local governments may not enact a regulation, rule, or policy that would limit an agritourism activity on land classified as agricultural land under s. 193.461, F.S.⁷

Protection from Liability

So long as an agritourism operator⁸ complies with the posting and notification requirements of s. 570.89, F.S., the owner of the land, the agritourism operator, and employer or employees are provided limited liability protection against injury, death, or damage to participants.⁹ Liability is not limited or prevented if the owner, operator, employer, or employees:¹⁰

- commit an act that constitutes gross negligence or willful or wanton disregard for the safety of the participant, or
- intentionally injure the participant.

Protection from Local Government Regulation

Section 570.85, F.S., provides that in accordance with the legislative intent to "eliminate duplication of regulatory authority over agritourism," a local government may not adopt an ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that prohibits, restricts, regulates, or otherwise limits an agritourism activity. This prohibition on local governments primarily pertains to ordinances to restrict hours of operation, number of participants, or parking for agritourism activities. The statutory prohibition addresses adoption of ordinances by local governments, but is silent as to enforcement of any such ordinances existing at the time of enactment.

⁴ Section 193.461(4)(b), F.S.

⁵ Florida Farm Bureau, Agritourism, *available at* <http://www.floridafarmbureau.org/files/resources/AgritourismBookletPrint.pdf> (last visited Feb. 23, 2015).

⁶ Chapter 2013-179, Laws of Fla.; SB 1106 (2013).

⁷ Section 570.85, F.S.

⁸ Section 570.86(2), F.S.

⁹ Section 570.88(1), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 570.88(2), F.S.

The prohibition does not extend to enactment of new local government ordinances related to construction of new or additional structures intended primarily to accommodate members of the general public, which would still be subject to all building and zoning laws.¹¹ Furthermore, the prohibition does not limit the powers and duties of a local government to address an emergency as provided in ch. 252, F.S.¹²

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 prohibits a local government from enforcing an ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that prohibits, restricts, regulates, or otherwise limits an agritourism activity on land classified as agricultural land.

Section 2 provides that this act shall take effect July 1, 2015.

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:

To the extent that the bill prevents local governments from enforcing any ordinances which would limit agritourism activity, farms may be able to supplement their revenues with additional revenue from agritourism.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

¹¹ Section 570.86(1), F.S.

¹² Section 570.85(1), F.S.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 570.85 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.