

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 Banking and Insurance

BILL: SB 822

INTRODUCER: Senator Stargel

SUBJECT: Firesafety

DATE: January 11, 2016

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Matiyow	Knudson	BI	Pre-meeting
2.			AGG	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 822 makes the following changes with regards to the regulation by the Fire Prevention Code on agricultural property:

- Defines “Agricultural pole barn” and exempts such barns from the Florida Fire Prevention Code, National Codes, and the Life Safety Code.
- Defines a “nonresidential farm building” and specifies certain uses allowing such buildings to be exempt from the Florida Fire Prevention Code, National Codes, and the Life Safety Code.
- Clarifies that a tent up to 900 square feet is exempt from the Florida Fire Prevention Code, National Codes, and the Life Safety Code.
- Authorizes a local fire official to consider the fire safety evaluation systems when trying to identify low-cost, reasonable alternatives.

II. Present Situation:

State Fire Prevention – State Fire Marshal

Florida’s fire prevention and control law, ch. 633, F.S., designates the state’s Chief Financial Officer (CFO) as the State Fire Marshal. The State Fire Marshal, through the Division of State Fire Marshal within the Department of Financial Services (DFS), is charged with enforcing the provisions of ch. 633, F.S., and all other applicable laws relating to fire safety and has the responsibility to minimize the loss of life and property in this state due to fire.¹ Pursuant to this authority, the State Fire Marshal regulates, trains, and certifies fire service personnel and firesafety inspectors; investigates the causes of fires; enforces arson laws; regulates the installation of fire equipment; conducts firesafety inspections of state property; and operates the Florida State Fire College.

¹ s. 633.104, F.S.

In addition to these duties, the State Fire Marshal adopts by rule the Florida Fire Prevention Code (FFPC), which contains all fire safety laws and rules that pertain to the design, construction, erection, alteration, modification, repair, and demolition of public and private buildings, structures, and facilities and the enforcement of such fire safety laws and rules, at ch. 69A-60, F.A.C. The State Fire Marshal adopts a new edition of the FFPC every three years.² The FFPC includes national firesafety and life safety standards set forth by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)³, including the NFPA's Fire Code (1), Life Safety Code (101) and Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety (101A).

The FFPC and national codes provide that events held in any location, whether agricultural or not, that are considered assembly, mercantile, or business in nature, require the building where such an event is held to be classified according to the proper occupancy type. When this occurs, the property owner must bring the building up to the new fire prevention code standards for that occupancy type. This may require the installation of several fire protection features such as fire sprinklers, fire alarm systems, or egress capacity.⁴

Fire Safety Enforcement by Local Governments

State law requires all municipalities, counties, and special districts with firesafety responsibilities to enforce the FFPC as the minimum fire prevention code to operate uniformly among local governments and in conjunction with the Florida Building Code.⁵ These local enforcing authorities may adopt more stringent fire safety standards, subject to certain requirements in s. 633.208, F.S.,⁶ but may not enact fire safety ordinances which conflict with ch. 633, F.S., or any other state law.⁷

The chiefs of local government fire service providers (or their designees) are authorized to enforce ch. 633, F.S., and rules within their respective jurisdictions as agents of those jurisdictions, not agents of the State Fire Marshal.⁸ Each county, municipality, and special district with firesafety enforcement responsibilities is also required to employ or contract with a

² s. 633.202, F.S.

³ Founded in 1895, the NFPA is a global, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. It has developed over 300 voluntary consensus codes and standards in the areas of fire, electrical, and building safety which are widely used by state and local officials. NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION, *About NFPA*, at <http://www.nfpa.org/about-nfpa> (last viewed Dec. 29, 2015). The NFPA states that the Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety "is intended to be used in conjunction with the Life Safety Code (101), not as a substitute." NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION, *NFPA 101A: Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety*, at <http://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/document-information-pages?mode=code&code=101a> (last viewed Dec. 29, 2015).

⁴ Florida Department of Financial Services, Agency Analysis of 2016 Senate Bill 822 (Nov. 18, 2015). The FFPC and national codes define *assembly occupancy* as an occupancy used for a gathering of 50 or more persons for deliberation, worship, entertainment, eating, drinking, amusement, awaiting transportation, or similar uses; or (2) used as a special amusement building, regardless of occupant load (e.g., dance halls, museums, skating rinks). *Mercantile occupancy* means an occupancy used for the display and sale of merchandise (e.g., drugstores and supermarkets). *Business occupancy* means an occupancy used for the transaction of business other than mercantile (e.g., city and town halls, doctors' offices).

⁵ ss. 633.108 and 633.208, F.S.

⁶ s. 633.208, F.S.; *see also* s. 633.102(21), F.S., for the definition of "minimum firesafety standard" and Rule 69A-60.002, F.A.C.

⁷ s. 633.214(4), F.S. A list of local amendments to the FFPC is available at DIVISION OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL, *Local Amendments*: <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/sfm/BFP/LocalAmendments.htm> (last viewed Dec. 29, 2015).

⁸ s. 633.118, F.S.

fire safety inspector (certified by the State Fire Marshal) to conduct all fire safety inspections required by law.⁹

The Legislature has recognized that it is not always practical to apply any or all of the provisions of the FFPC, under the minimum fire safety standards, the local fire officials shall apply the applicable fire safety code for existing buildings to the extent practical to ensure a reasonable degree of life safety and safety of property. The local fire officials are also required to fashion reasonable alternatives that afford an equivalent degree of life safety and safety of property.¹⁰

Current Exemptions from the FFPC

Currently, s. 633.202(16), F.S., exempts two types of structures from the FFPC and national codes incorporated by reference:

- A structure located on property that is classified as agricultural for ad valorem purposes and which is part of a farming or ranching operation, if the occupancy is limited by the property owner to no more than 35 persons and is not used by the public for direct sales or as an educational outreach facility. Structures used for residential or assembly purposes (as defined in the FFPC) are not included in this exemption.¹¹
- Tents up to 30 feet by 30 feet.

“Nonresidential farm buildings” are currently not exempt from the FFPC, but are exempt from the Florida Building Code and any county or municipal code or fee, except for code provisions implementing local, state, or federal floodplain management regulations.¹² These structures are defined under s. 604.50, F.S., as any temporary or permanent building or support structure that is classified as a nonresidential farm building on a farm for the purposes of the Florida Building Code, or that is classified as agricultural land for assessment purposes, is used primarily for agricultural purposes, is located on land that is an integral part of a farm operation and is not intended to be used as a residential dwelling. The term may include, but is not limited to, a barn, greenhouse, shade house, farm office, storage building, or poultry house.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill defines an “Agricultural pole barn” as a nonresidential farm building in which 70 percent or more of the perimeter walls are permanently open and allow free ingress and egress. Furthermore, the bill exempts such pole barns from the Florida Fire Prevention Code, National Codes and the Life Safety Code.

The bill defines a nonresidential farm building for purposes of the Florida Fire Prevention Code as having the same meaning as provided in s. 604.50, F.S. The bill establishes classes for use in

⁹ s. 633.216(1), F.S.

¹⁰ s. 633.208, F.S.

¹¹ Chapter 6 of the FFPC defines “residential occupancy” as “an occupancy that provides sleeping accommodations for purposes other than health care or detention and correctional,” and defines “assembly occupancy” as “an occupancy (1) used for a gathering of 50 or more persons for deliberation, worship, entertainment, eating, drinking, amusement, awaiting transportation, or similar uses; or (2) used as a special amusement building, regardless of occupant load.” See NFPA, *Classification of Occupancy and Hazard of Contents*, <http://codesonline.nfpa.org/a/c.ref/ID020101110939/chapter> (last viewed Dec. 29, 2015).

¹² s. 604.50(1), F.S.

which such buildings can be exempt from the Florida Fire Prevention Code, National Codes and the Life Safety Code:

Class 1: A nonresidential farm building that is used by the owner 12 times per year or fewer for assembly, business, or mercantile activity with up to 100 persons occupying the structure at one time. This class is not subject to inspection or the Florida Fire Prevention Code.

Class 2: A nonresidential farm building that is used by the owner for assembly, business, or mercantile activity with up to 300 persons occupying the structure at one time. A structure in this class is subject to annual inspection for classification by the local authority having jurisdiction. This class is not subject to the Florida Fire Prevention Code.

Class 3: A new or an additional structure or facility constructed, or an existing structure, which is used primarily for housing, sheltering, or otherwise accommodating members of the general public. A structure or facility in this class is subject to annual inspection for classification by the local authority having jurisdiction. This class is subject to the Florida Fire Prevention Code.

The bill requires the State Fire Marshal to adopt rules to administer this section, including;

- The use of alternative lifesafety and fire prevention standards Classes 1 and 2 structures;
- Notification and inspection requirements for structures in Class 2;
- The application of the Florida Fire Prevention Code for structures in Class 3; and
- Any other standards or rules deemed necessary in order to facilitate the use of structures for assembly, business, or mercantile activities.

Lastly, the bill allows for a local fire official to consider the fire safety evaluation systems found in NFPA 101A: Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety, adopted by the State Fire Marshal, as acceptable systems for the identification of low-cost, reasonable alternatives to firesafety.

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:

Farm owners will be allowed to lease to the public the use of non-residential agricultural buildings for certain events without having to make costly retrofitting improvements to meet the requirements of the Florida Fire Prevention Code, National Codes, and the Life Safety Code.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Financial Services will need to adopt rules to administer these changes including the use of alternative standards, the inspection requirements for Class 2 and the application process for Class 3.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

Lines 40 and 44 appear to conflict. A technical amendment is needed to clarify that pole barns are always exempt from the Florida Fire Prevention Code, National Codes, and the Life Safety Code regardless of use.

VII. Related Issues:

The Division of the State Fire Marshal would like to annually inspect buildings in Class 1 to insure they are suitable to house up to 100 people while being exempt from the fire code. Additionally, the Division would like all Classes to be subject to any rules promulgated by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to this section.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 633.202 and 633.208.

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.