

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Rules

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BILL: CS/CS/CS/SB 666

INTRODUCER: Rules Committee; Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; Commerce and Tourism Committee; and Senator Mayfield

SUBJECT: Florida Development Finance Corporation

DATE: February 26, 2020

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Harmsen</u>	<u>McKay</u>	<u>CM</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>McVaney</u>	<u>McVaney</u>	<u>GO</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
3.	<u>Harmsen</u>	<u>Phelps</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>

**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/CS/CS/SB 666 modifies the governance and administration of the Florida Development Finance Corporation (FDFC) by:

- Requiring the FDFC and Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to provide additional annual reporting on the FDFC's activities;
- Redesigning the FDFC's board of directors to include the executive director of the DEO, who will serve as the chair of the board, and the director of the State Board of Administration's Division of Bond Finance;
- Implementing a conflict of interest policy for the FDFC's board of directors; and
- Instituting a sunset repeal, effective July 1, 2023, and every four years thereafter, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

The bill is not expected to impact state and local government revenues and expenditures.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.

## II. Present Situation:

### Florida Development Finance Corporation

#### *Operation*

The FDFC is a statewide development financing authority created by the Legislature in 1993.<sup>1</sup> The original purpose of the FDFC was to foster the growth of manufacturing and other strong job-creating businesses in Florida by brokering private-activity bond financing through inter-local agreements with counties, municipalities, and other local political subdivisions.<sup>2</sup>

In the 2010 legislative session, the FDFC's responsibilities were broadened to allow it to participate in a federal Department of Energy guaranteed loan program for the development of renewable energy infrastructure projects, and related energy projects that may be eligible under federal law.<sup>3</sup> The FDFC has the power to function within the corporate limits of any public agency including local governments with which it enters into an inter-local agreement.<sup>4</sup>

Pursuant to s. 288.9605, F.S., the FDFC operates as a conduit bond issuer that issues bonds on behalf of borrowers.<sup>5</sup> While the FDFC functions as a mechanism to help borrowers access capital markets, it does not take on responsibility of debt repayment, even when a borrower fails to repay.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, the FDFC does not guarantee the bonds it issues but certain borrowers may opt in to the guaranty fund established by the FDFC pursuant to s. 288.9607, F.S., which guarantees that the bonds issued will be repaid. This guaranty fund consists of premiums paid by businesses that wish to participate in the fund and by a property interest in the infrastructure built with the insured bond's proceeds.<sup>7</sup>

A majority of the FDFC's financial assistance results from the issuance of municipal bonds, of which it may issue either a taxable revenue bond or a tax-exempt bond.<sup>8</sup> The bonds issued can provide financing for projects that further public purposes and are issued on behalf of a range of organizations.

Tax exempt bonds, known also as private activity bonds, require additional borrower qualification processes, including approval pursuant to the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1986 (TEFRA) and allocation from the Florida State Board of Administration's Division

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 288, Part X, F.S. The corporation was created as a "public body corporate and politic" meaning that it is a legal entity or corporation with a public function. Ch. 93-187, ss. 24-45, Laws of Fla.

<sup>2</sup> Section 288.9602, F.S., generally expresses the legislative intent of the FDFC.

<sup>3</sup> Sections 2-10, ch. 2010-139, Laws of Fla.

<sup>4</sup> Section 288.9605(2)(e), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> "[The] FDFC facilitated the issuance of debt obligations...[t]hese bonds do not constitute a general debt, liability or obligation of FDFC, the state, or any local government." Florida Development Finance Corporation, *Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2019*, 12 (on file with the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism). See also, Florida Development Finance Corporation, *Bond Financing*, <https://www.fdfcbonds.com/traditional-bonds> (last visited Feb. 26, 2020).

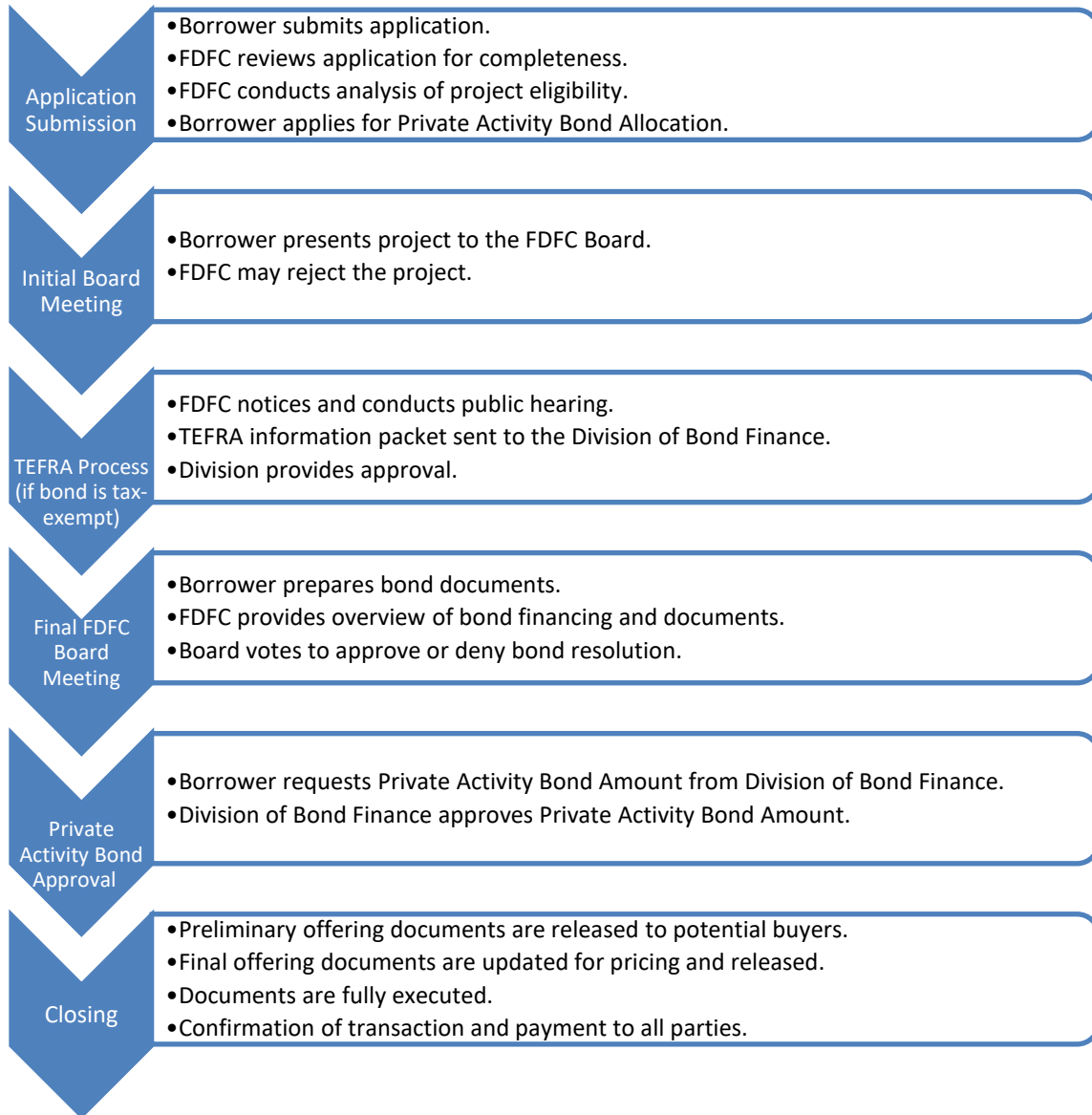
<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> The guaranty may not exceed 5 percent of the aggregate principal amount of bonds or other indebtedness relating to any capital project. Section 288.9607, F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Florida Development Finance Corporation, *About Us*, <https://www.fdfcbonds.com/copy-of-about-us> (last visited Feb. 26, 2020).

of Bond Finance. These bonds are more lucrative financing options because they tend to have a lower interest rate than bank loans or taxable fixed-income securities, and investors benefit by not paying income taxes on interest payments.<sup>9</sup> The FDFC helps its borrowers pursue private activity bonds by assisting them with the additional qualification processes.<sup>10</sup>

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, the FDFC facilitated the issuance of \$2,885,710,000 in eight new bonds. The borrowers served by these bonds include two charter schools, one solid waste disposal, two surface transportation, one healthcare, one student housing, and one not-for-profit business.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Steven Maguire and Joseph Hughes, Congressional Research Service, *Private Activity Bonds: An Introduction* (July 13, 2018), available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL31457.pdf> (last visited Feb. 26, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Florida Development Finance Corporation, *Bond Financing*, note 5.

<sup>11</sup> Florida Development Finance Corporation *Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2019*, *supra* note 5 at 3.

More generally, an applicant who wishes to work with the FDFC must submit an application, meet board approval for its project, and in cases of tax-exempt bonds, undergo a public hearing and receive approval from the State Board of Administration's Division of Bond Finance, and then have bonds issued for its project. (See exhibit above).<sup>12</sup>

The FDFC also administers the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program, for which it also may issue bonds and other financial assistance that supports energy conservation.<sup>13</sup> The PACE Program was launched June 29, 2017 and allows a property owner to use equity accrued from the original purchase as the basis for an extension of credit.<sup>14</sup> The PACE Program facilitated \$19,353,886 in five taxable residential bonds for the 2019 fiscal year.<sup>15</sup>

FDFC's revenues are generated exclusively by fees it charges for the issuance of bonds.<sup>16</sup> The fees assessed are a \$1,500 application fee and a tiered issuance fee due at the time of closing (sale of bonds). The tiered issuance fee is based on the face value of the bond issued: bonds valued from \$0 - \$2.5 million pay 75 basis points (0.75%); bonds valued from \$2.5-\$32.5 million pay 25 basis points (0.25%); and bonds valued over \$32.5 million pay 10 basis points (0.10%).<sup>17</sup>

### ***Governance and Administration***

The FDFC is governed by a five-member board of directors who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for four-year terms.<sup>18</sup> At least three of the FDFC's directors must be bankers selected from a list of candidates nominated by the Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI), and one must be an economic development specialist.<sup>19</sup> The directors are vested with the FDFC's powers and may take action on behalf of the corporation by a vote of a majority of the directors present at a meeting, unless otherwise required by the FDFC's bylaws.<sup>20</sup> The directors do not receive compensation for their service but are entitled to necessary expenses, including travel expenses.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, the board is empowered to employ a staff to facilitate the FDFC's functions.<sup>22</sup>

The FDFC must provide an annual report to the Governor, the Legislature, the Auditor General, and the governing body of each public entity with which it has an interlocal agreement which details:

- The FDFC's activities, operations, and accomplishments, including the specific number of businesses that the FDFC assisted;

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<sup>12</sup> OPPAGA, *Florida Development Finance Corporation has Recently Taken Steps to Improve Accountability* (Nov. 15, 2017) (on file with the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism).

<sup>13</sup> Florida Development Finance Corporation, *Property Assessed Clean Energy "PACE"- Commercial PACE*, <https://www.fdfcbonds.com/pace-commercial> (last visited Feb. 26, 2020). See also, s. 288.9606(7), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> Florida Development Finance Corporation, *Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2019*, *supra* note 5 at 3.

<sup>16</sup> Florida Development Finance Corporation, *Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2019*, *supra* note 5 at 6.

<sup>17</sup> Florida Development Finance Corporation, *Conduit Issuance Policy*, 6-7 (Feb. 26, 2019), available at [https://ca5cce56-0e6c-4988-82a7-74892bf1d07e.filesusr.com/ugd/b1b27e\\_0b227d45ff2b4e139bb36f2846f70b4b.pdf](https://ca5cce56-0e6c-4988-82a7-74892bf1d07e.filesusr.com/ugd/b1b27e_0b227d45ff2b4e139bb36f2846f70b4b.pdf) (last visited Feb. 26, 2020).

<sup>18</sup> Section 288.9604(2), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Section 288.9604(2), F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Section 288.9604(3), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Section 288.9604(3)(a)1., F.S.

<sup>22</sup> Section 288.9604(3)(c), F.S.

- The FDFC's assets, liabilities, income, and operating expenses, including a description of all outstanding revenue bonds; and
- Any findings made by the Auditor General in an audit conducted pursuant to s. 11.45, F.S.

### **Department of Economic Opportunity**

The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) was created to assist the Governor in working with the Legislature, state agencies, business leaders, and economic development professionals to formulate and implement coherent and consistent policies and strategies designed to promote economic opportunities for all Floridians.<sup>23</sup> Within the DEO, the Division of Strategic Business Development evaluates business prospects; administers tax refund, tax credit, and grant programs; develops performance measures for state incentive programs and contracted entities; and develops and updates a 5-year statewide strategic plan for business expansion and economic development, consulting with EFI and CareerSource Florida, Inc. (CareerSource). The Division of Community Development assists local governments with community planning, administers state and federal community development grant programs, and assists in the development of the 5-year statewide strategic plan. The Division of Workforce Services submits a unified budget request for workforce development in conjunction with CareerSource, ensures that the state appropriately administers federal and state workforce funding, implements the state's reemployment assistance program, and assists in developing the 5-year statewide strategic plan.<sup>24</sup>

The DEO, with assistance from EFI, must submit by November 1 of each year an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the condition of the business climate and economic development in the state. The report must include the identification of problems, a prioritized list of recommendations, and the annual reports of specified other programs.<sup>25</sup> The DEO must establish annual performance standards for EFI, CareerSource, VISIT FLORIDA, and Space Florida, and report annually on how these performance measures are being met in the annual report.<sup>26</sup>

The head of the DEO is the executive director, who is appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The executive director serves at the pleasure of and reports to the Governor.<sup>27</sup> The executive director manages all activities and responsibilities of the DEO, and serves as the manager for the state with respect to contracts with EFI, and all applicable direct-support organizations.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Division of Bond Finance**

The Division of Bond Finance (Division) was created by the Legislature in 1969 to issue bonds on behalf of local governments and agencies of the State of Florida. It assumed the powers of its predecessor, the Florida Development Commission. The Division has been administratively

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<sup>23</sup> Section 20.60(4), F.S.

<sup>24</sup> Section 20.60(5), F.S.

<sup>25</sup> Section 20.60(10), F.S.

<sup>26</sup> Section 20.60(11), F.S.

<sup>27</sup> Section 20.60(2), F.S.

<sup>28</sup> Section 20.60(9), F.S.

housed within the State Board of Administration since 1992 and operates under the control of a governing board which consists of the Governor and Cabinet.<sup>29</sup> The Division has the power to:

- Sue and be sued;
- Issue any bonds of the state, and to issue bonds on behalf of any state agency;
- Exercise all of the powers relating to the issuance of bonds of any state agency;
- Employ a director of the division to be designated by the Governor;
- Employ or retain persons, firms, or corporations;
- Prepare resolutions and other necessary proceedings relating to the issuance and sale of bonds;
- Sell all state bonds authorized by law;
- Request assistance related to bond issuance from any state agency;
- Exercise the power of eminent domain;
- Remit the proceeds of any bonds sold for any state agency;
- Exercise control over the state's arbitrage compliance program; and
- Undertake investigations.<sup>30</sup>

The Division also determines the allocations for private activity bonds permitted to be issued in Florida under the Internal Revenue Code.<sup>31</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

#### Board of Directors

**Section 1** amends s. 20.60, F.S., to designate the executive director of the DEO to serve as a member of the FDFC. The executive director is authorized to designate another DEO employee to serve in this capacity.

**Section 2** amends s. 288.9604, F.S., to restructure the FDFC board of directors to add two new director positions that will be filled by the DEO's executive director and the State Board of Administration's director of the Division of Bond Finance, or his or her designee. The DEO executive director, or his or her designee, will serve at the chair of the board of directors. The bill maintains the board's capacity to elect a vice chair, and clarifies that the vice chair must be elected by a majority vote of the board.

This section makes conforming changes to transition the remaining five board seats, which are filled by gubernatorial appointees, to board director roles exclusively. The eligibility requirements for directors is broadened to require three of the appointed directors to be individuals with experience in finance, and a fourth to be an individual with experience in economic development. Additionally, this section removes the role of the EFI from the appointment process, thereby allowing individuals to apply directly to the Governor or FDFC to serve as board directors, rather than going through a nomination process that involves the EFI.

<sup>29</sup> Information from <https://www.sbafla.com/bond/Home/About-the-Division-of-Bond-Finance>, last visited Feb. 26, 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Section 215.64, F.S.

<sup>31</sup> Section 159.804, F.S. See also, Division of Bond Finance, *Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) Approval*, <https://www.sbafla.com/bondfinance/Other-Functions/TEFRA>, last visited Feb. 26, 2020.

This section also clarifies that the board of directors may conduct meetings by teleconference.

**Section 3** provides that those members who serve as the chair and vice chair of the FDFC's board of directors as of June 30, 2020, will serve as regular members of the board of directors beginning on July 1, 2020.

**Section 7** creates a conflict of interest policy for the FDFC's board of directors in s. 288.9619, F.S. The policy requires any FDFC director who has an interest in a party that is associated with an application that the FDFC has taken or will take action on to disclose the interest to the FDFC, record such disclosure in the FDFC's minutes, and remove him or herself from participation in the FDFC's actions on or relating to the application.

### **Corporate Activities**

**Section 5** amends s. 288.9606, F.S., to allow a bond, note, or other form of indebtedness issued pursuant to the Florida Development Finance Corporation Act to be issued for a term of up to 35 years. Currently, those bonds are limited to a maturity term of no more than 30 fiscal years.

This section also adds language that clarifies that bonds issued under part X of ch. 288, F.S., are not a debt, liability, or obligation of Florida or its political subdivisions, and do not constitute a pledge of the FDFC, Florida, or its political subdivisions' faith and credit for the repayment thereof. Additionally, those bonds issued under part X of ch. 288, F.S., must bear a statement to this effect.

**Section 4** amends s. 288.9605, F.S., to permit the FDFC to execute and deliver any document, agreement, or instrument in accordance with the Electronic Signature Act of 1996.

### **Reporting Requirements**

**Section 6** amends s. 288.9610, F.S., to require the FDFC to furnish a copy of its annual report to the DEO and the governing body of each public entity for which the FDFC issues revenue bonds pursuant to s. 288.9606, F.S., on or before 90 days after the close of its fiscal year. Additionally, **section 1** amends s. 20.60, F.S., to require the DEO to include both a summary of the FDFC's annual report and an additional detailed report on the FDFC's performance in its own annual report, due on November 1 of each year to the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

### **Effective Date and Sunset Provision**

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2020, and subjects the FDFC to sunset on July 1, 2023, and every fourth year thereafter, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

## **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

The mandate restrictions in the State Constitution do not apply because the bill does not require counties and municipalities to spend funds, reduce counties' or municipalities'

ability to raise revenue, or reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties and municipalities.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None identified.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

**Potential Conflict of Interest for the Division of Bond Finance**

Lines 94-97 designates the director of the Division of Bond Finance, or his or her designee, as a member of the board of directors of the FDFC. The Division of Bond Finance has an active role in approving tax exempt bond issues and the amount of private activity bond allocations for particular issues. This dual role of director (as a member of the board and the approving authority) may create an appearance of conflict or an actual conflict.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.



**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 20.60, 288.9604, 288.9605, 288.9606, and 288.9610.

The bill also creates section 288.9619 of the Florida Statutes and an unnumbered section of law.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

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

**CS/CS/CS by Rules on February 26, 2020:**

- Clarifies the eligibility of the appointed members of the FDFC’s board of directors;
- Allows meetings of the directors to be held via teleconference;
- Permits the board of directors to elect a vice chair by a majority vote of its members;
- Extends the first sunset date of s. 288.9604 from October 1, 2022 to July 1, 2023;
- Permits the FDFC to electronically execute and deliver documents in accordance with the Electronic Signatures Act of 1996;
- Extends, from 30 fiscal years to 35 calendar years, the permitted duration of bonds, notes, and any other form of indebtedness issued under Part X of ch. 288, F.S.;
- Includes language that restates the FDFC’s, the State’s, and its political subdivisions’ financial obligations relating to bonds issued under Part X of ch. 288, F.S.;
- Requires the FDFC to submit an annual report and other related documents to public entities for which it issued revenue bonds; and
- Establishes a conflict of interest policy for the FDFC’s directors.

**CS/CS by Governmental Oversight and Accountability on February 10, 2020:**

- Clarifies that the DEO executive director may designate a DEO employee to serve as a member and chair of the FDFC.
- Removes from the bill unnecessary language regarding the continuation of contracts between FDFC and others.

**CS by Commerce and Tourism on January 21, 2020:**

- Substituted “directors” for the term “members” to provide for consistent use of terminology; and
- Removed from the bill the transfer of the FDFC’s officers, employees, and administrative and support staff to the DEO.

**B. Amendments:**

None.