

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: [CS/CS/CS/HB 1177](#)

TITLE: Spaceport Operations and Space Florida

SPONSOR(S): Sirois

COMPANION BILL: [SB 1512](#) (Burgess)

LINKED BILLS: [HB 1179](#) Sirois

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Ways & Means](#)

18 Y, 1 N, As CS



[Transportation & Economic](#)

[Development Budget](#)

13 Y, 0 N, As CS



[Commerce](#)

23 Y, 0 N, As CS

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill defines the term “strategic spaceport hub” and requires the governing board of a seaport located within 5 miles of such a hub to coordinate with Space Florida prior to making any change to its strategic plan.

The bill provides that Space Florida is not subject to the competitive bidding requirements of [s. 255.20, F.S.](#), when purchasing professional or construction services, or both, using funds that are not appropriated by the Legislature.

The bill requires Space Florida to employ a full-time business development director for certain spaceport territories to foster the growth and development of spaceport activities, including, but not limited to, horizontal launch capability, advanced air mobility, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

The bill revises the membership on the Space Florida board of directors to make a representative of the Jacksonville Aviation Authority a full, voting member of the board rather than an ex officio, nonvoting member.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill requires Space Florida to hire a full-time business development director for specified purposes. These costs are expected to be absorbed within Space Florida’s existing resources.

JUMP TO

[SUMMARY](#)

[ANALYSIS](#)

[RELEVANT INFORMATION](#)

[BILL HISTORY](#)

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill requires the governing board of a [seaport](#) located within 5 miles of a strategic spaceport hub,¹ prior to making any change to its strategic plan, to coordinate with [Space Florida](#) to ensure that the change does not conflict with Space Florida’s business plan.² (Section [1](#))

The bill provides that Space Florida is not subject to the [competitive bidding requirements](#) of [s. 255.20, F.S.](#), when purchasing professional or construction services, or both, using funds that are not appropriated by the Legislature. The bill requires that for such purchases Space Florida attest in writing that the funds used are not appropriated by the Legislature. (Section [2](#))

The bill requires Space Florida to employ a full-time business development director for certain [spaceport territories](#), whose primary focus must be to foster the growth and development of [spaceport](#) activities, including, but not limited to, horizontal launch capability, advanced air mobility, and unmanned aerial vehicles. (Section [3](#))

¹ For purposes of the bill, the term “strategic spaceport hub” is defined to mean spaceport territory located within 5 miles of a seaport listed in [s. 311.09\(1\), F.S.](#), that is used for deepwater commercial navigation.

² [S. 331.3051\(1\), F.S.](#), requires Space Florida to create a business plan to foster the growth and development of the aerospace industry.

STORAGE NAME: h1177d.COM

DATE: 3/2/2026

The bill revises the [Space Florida board of directors](#) to make a representative of the [Jacksonville Aviation Authority](#), appointed by the Governor, a full, voting member of the board rather than an ex officio, nonvoting member as provided under current law. (Section [4](#))

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section [5](#))

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill requires Space Florida to hire a full-time business development director for specified purposes. These costs are expected to be absorbed within Space Florida's existing resources.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Space Florida

The Legislature passed the Space Florida Act in 2006,³ which consolidated Florida's three existing space entities – Florida Space Authority, Florida Space Research Institute, and Florida Aerospace Finance Corporation – into a single entity called Space Florida.⁴ [Space Florida](#) is established as an independent special district, a body politic and corporate, and a subdivision of the state.⁵ Space Florida is subject to the provisions of the Uniform Special District Accountability Act, which governs issues like operations, financial reporting, taxation, assessments, elections, compliance with general law, and comprehensive planning.⁶

Space Florida's objectives include supporting the growth and development of a sustainable and world-leading aerospace industry in Florida.⁷ Space Florida acts as Florida's point of contact for state aerospace-related activities with federal agencies, the military, state agencies, businesses, and the private sector.⁸ Space Florida is authorized to purchase or construct facilities, set rates, fees, and charges for the use of facilities, undertake joint financing with municipalities or private sector entities, and execute contracts with persons or spaceport users to facilitate the financing, construction, leasing, or sale of any project.⁹

Powers and Duties of Space Florida

Florida law provides certain powers to Space Florida, including, but not limited to:¹⁰

- Using a corporate seal;
- Using patents, copyrights, and trademarks;
- Lending and investing money;
- Acquiring certain properties;
- Executing contracts;
- Issuing revenue bonds;
- Making expenditures for entertainment and travel expenses and business clients, guests, and other authorized persons; and
- Fixing and collecting fees, loan payments, rental payments, and other charges in connection with financing agreements.

³ [Ch. 2006-60, Laws of Fla.](#)

⁴ See [ss. 331.301, F.S.](#), through [331.371, F.S.](#)

⁵ [S. 331.302\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁶ [S. 331.302\(5\), F.S.](#)

⁷ [S. 331.302\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁸ [S. 331.3011\(3\), F.S.](#)

⁹ [S. 331.305, F.S.](#)

¹⁰ *Id.*

Florida law also gives Space Florida certain duties, including, but not limited to, creating a business plan, entering into agreements and cooperating with other state agencies, and consulting with appropriate federal agencies.¹¹ Specifically, Space Florida is required to:

- Enter into agreements with the Department of Education, DOT, the Department of Commerce, and CareerSource Florida.¹²
- In cooperation with the Department of Commerce, collaborate to develop a plan to retain, expand, attract, and create aerospace industry entities, public or private, which results in the creation of high-value-added businesses and jobs in Florida.¹³
- Develop, in cooperation with the Department of Commerce, a plan to provide financing assistance to aerospace businesses.¹⁴
- Carry out its responsibilities for spaceport operations by:¹⁵
 - Seeking federal support and developing partnerships to renew and upgrade the infrastructure and technologies at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, the John F. Kennedy Space Center, and the Eastern Range.
 - Supporting federal efforts to clarify roles and responsibilities of federal agencies in an effort to streamline access for commercial launch users.
 - Pursuing the development of commercial spaceports in the state in partnership with counties or municipalities, the Federal Government, or private entities.
 - Promoting and facilitating launch activity within the state by supporting and assisting the efforts of commercial launch operators to obtain authorization from federal agencies for launching from Florida.
 - Consulting, as necessary, with the appropriate federal, state, and local authorities, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, DOT, Florida National Guard, and industry on establishing and operating spaceport infrastructure and facilities in the state.

Board of Directors

The [Space Florida board of directors](#) is comprised of nine voting members and three ex officio, nonvoting members. The governor (or designee of the governor) serves ex officio as the chair and a voting member of the board and appoints five additional voting board members with experience in the aerospace industry, bond finance, a relevant academic field, or other specified airport or aircraft operations. The remainder of the voting board members consists of the Secretary of Transportation, one member appointed by the President of the Senate, and one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The governor selects the three ex officio, nonvoting members of the board, which consist of a representative of the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, a representative of the [Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority](#), and an employee or official of a port district or port authority.¹⁶

Public Works Projects

Chapter 255, F.S., provides the procurement process for public construction works. A public works project is an activity that is paid for with any state-appropriated funds and involves the construction, maintenance, repair, renovation, remodeling, or improvement of a building, road, street, sewer, storm drain, water system, site development, irrigation system, reclamation project, gas or electrical distribution system, gas or electrical substation, or other facility, project, or portion thereof owned in whole or in part by any political subdivision.¹⁷

¹¹ [S. 331.3051, F.S.](#)

¹² [S. 331.3051\(2\), F.S.](#)

¹³ [S. 331.3051\(3\), F.S.](#)

¹⁴ [S. 331.3051\(6\), F.S.](#)

¹⁵ [S. 331.3051\(7\), F.S.](#)

¹⁶ [S. 331.3081, F.S.](#)

¹⁷ [S. 255.0992\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

Section [255.20, F.S.](#), requires governmental entities to competitively award each project that is estimated to cost more than \$300,000 to an appropriately licensed contractor. For electrical work, a governmental entity must competitively bid a project that is estimated to cost more than \$75,000.¹⁸

The term “competitively award” means to award contracts based on the submission of sealed bids, proposals submitted in response to a request for proposal, proposals submitted in response to a request for qualifications, or proposals submitted for competitive negotiation.¹⁹

Except as required by federal or state law, the state or any political subdivision²⁰ that contracts for a public works project may not:²¹

- Prevent a certified, licensed, or registered contractor, subcontractor, or material supplier or carrier, from participating in the bidding process based on the geographic location of the headquarters or offices of the party, unless the local government is the sole source of funding for the project;
- Require a contractor, subcontractor, or material supplier or carrier engaged in the project to:
 - Pay employees a predetermined amount of wages or prescribe any wage rate;
 - Provide employees a specified type, amount, or rate of employee benefits;
 - Control, limit, or expand staffing; or
 - Recruit, train, or hire employees from a designated, restricted, or single source.
- Prohibit any contractor, subcontractor, or material supplier or carrier from submitting a bid on the project if such individual is able to perform the work described and is qualified, licensed, or certified as required by state law.

[Spaceports in Florida](#)

Under Florida law, a spaceport is defined as any area of land or water developed by Space Florida and intended for public use or for the launching, takeoff, and landing of spacecraft and aircraft, including any appurtenant areas which are used or intended for public use, for spaceport buildings, or for other spaceport facilities, spaceport projects, or rights-of-way.²² Florida law designates certain real property within the state as “[spaceport territory](#),”²³ including Cape Canaveral Spaceport in Brevard County, Cecil Spaceport in Duval County, Eglin Air Force Base in Okaloosa County, Cape San Blas in Gulf County, Space Coast Regional Airport and Spaceport in Brevard County, Homestead Air Reserve Base in Miami-Dade County, and Tyndall Air Force Base in Bay County.²⁴

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for licensing launch and reentry operations at commercial spaceports.²⁵ An FAA license is not required for space activities that the federal government carries out for its own purposes, such as some NASA or U.S. Department of Defense launches.²⁶ Currently, three Florida spaceports are licensed by the FAA. The Cape Canaveral Spaceport is licensed by the FAA for vertical and horizontal launch and for reentry operations.²⁷ Cecil Spaceport, operated by the [Jacksonville Aviation Authority](#),

¹⁸ [S. 255.20\(1\), F.S.](#)

¹⁹ [S. 255.20\(1\), F.S.](#)

²⁰ “Political subdivision” means a separate agency or unit of local government created or established by law or ordinance and the officers thereof. The term includes, but is not limited to, a county; a city, town, or other municipality; or a department, commission, authority, school district, taxing district, water management district, board, public corporation, institution of higher education, or other public agency or body thereof authorized to expend public funds for construction, maintenance, repair, or improvement of public works. See [s. 255.0992\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

²¹ [S. 255.0992, F.S.](#)

²² [S. 331.303\(17\), F.S.](#)

²³ [S. 331.304, F.S.](#)

²⁴ Space Florida, *Spaceport System Territory*, <https://www.spaceflorida.gov/spaceport-system-territory> (last visited Feb. 19, 2026).

²⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, *Commercial Space Transportation Activities*, <https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/commercial-space-transportation-activities> (last visited Feb. 19, 2026).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, *Spaceports by State*, https://www.faa.gov/space/spaceports_by_state#fl_sflc (last visited Feb. 19, 2026).

and [Space Coast Spaceport, operated by the Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority](#), are licensed by the FAA for horizontal launch operations.²⁸

Spaceport Planning

Space Florida must develop a spaceport master plan for expansion and modernization of space transportation facilities within spaceport territories. The plan must contain recommended projects to meet current and future commercial, national, and state space transportation requirements. Further, the plan must identify appropriate funding levels and include recommendations on appropriate sources of revenue that may be developed to contribute to the State Transportation Trust Fund.

Space Florida must submit the spaceport master plan to any appropriate metropolitan planning organization for review of intermodal impacts and to DOT for inclusion in its five-year work program of qualifying aerospace discretionary capacity improvement projects. Subject to availability of appropriated funds, DOT may participate in the capital cost of such projects.

Seaports in Florida

Florida has 16 publicly owned [seaports](#) located around the state.²⁹ The governing board of each seaport is a government entity, either a county or city department, an independent special district, or an independent port authority. Florida law establishes the Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development (FSTED) Council, comprised of the port directors of each of Florida's sixteen seaports, along with representatives from FDOT and the Department of Commerce.³⁰

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ Florida's sixteen seaports are Port of Pensacola, Port Panama City, Port of Port St. Joe, Port Citrus, Port Tampa Bay, Port St. Pete, Seaport Manatee, Port of Key West, PortMiami, Port Everglades, Port of Palm Beach, Port of Fort Pierce, Port Canaveral, Port Putnam, Jaxport, and Port of Fernandina. Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council, *2025-2029 Seaport Mission Plan*, at page 6, available at https://flaports.org/wp-content/uploads/2025_SeaportMissionPlan.pdf (last visited Mar. 2, 2026).

³⁰ *Id.* at page 3.; see also [s. 311.09\(1\), F.S.](#)

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Ways & Means Committee	18 Y, 1 N, As CS	2/10/2026	Aldridge	Berg
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised sales tax exemption language for clarity; Provided that authority over operational oversight, management, and day-to-day administration of each spaceport in Florida is vested in the spaceport’s director or commander; Required each spaceport to develop and maintain an operational governance plan consistent with Space Florida’s statewide strategic plan; Required each spaceport to maintain an updated list of spaceport site readiness development projects and specifies the types of projects to be included on the list; Provided that powers and duties specified for spaceports under new section do not apply to federal property; and Defined the term “quintimodal transportation hub” and required Space Florida to enhance and promote development and use of such hubs in Florida. 			
Transportation & Economic Development Budget Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/16/2026	Davis	McAuliffe
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed the language that certain property being used by a private lessee pursuant to a project authorized by Space Florida may qualify for a property tax exemption. Removed the language that creates a sales tax exemption for certain machinery and equipment owned by Space Florida and leased pursuant to a project authorized by Space Florida. 			
Commerce Committee	23 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/26/2026	Hamon	Rubottom
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined the term “strategic spaceport hub” and required any seaport located within 5 miles of a strategic spaceport hub to coordinate with Space Florida before changing its strategic plan. Required Space Florida to employ a full-time business development director to foster the growth and development of certain activities. Revised the membership of Space Florida’s board of directors. Removed provisions defining “quintimodal transportation hub” and “spaceport operations commander.” Removed a provision requiring Space Florida to enhance and promote the development and use of quintimodal transportation hubs. Removed a provision addressing powers and duties of spaceport operators and Space Florida with respect to the operation, administration, planning, and governance of spaceports. 			

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.
