

CS/CS/CS/HB 963 — Seaports

by the Economic Development & Community Affairs Policy Council, the Full Appropriations Council on Education and Economic Development, the Committee on Economic Development Policy, Rep. Ray and others (CS/CS/CS/CS/SB 2000 by the Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means, the Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee, the Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee, the Commerce Committee, and Senator Ring)

Florida has 14 public seaports: Port of Fernandina, Port of Fort Pierce, Port of Jacksonville, Port of Key West, Port of Miami, Port of Palm Beach, Port Panama City, Port of Pensacola, Port Canaveral, Port Everglades, Port Manatee, Port St. Joe, Port of St. Petersburg, and Port of Tampa. Each has different infrastructure needs to maintain their competitiveness and improve their capabilities to handle and move cargo.

This bill includes several inter-related proposals related to seaports:

- It creates a port conceptual permit system that will allow the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to issue an umbrella permit that ties together a series of individual environmental permits and authorizations normally needed for port construction projects or dredging operations.
- It specifies that seaport projects to rehabilitate wharves, docks, berths, bulkheads, and similar structures only require a 25-percent match, rather than a 50-percent match, for state funding available under the existing Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development (FSTED) funding program.
- It requires the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to include specific FSTED approved seaport projects to be funded during the ensuing fiscal year in its tentative transportation work program. The total amount of funding to be allocated to seaport projects in the next successive 4 fiscal years also must be included, but no specific projects will be tied to those outer-year funds.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2010, except as otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-0