

# FPSC Highlights

Florida's 2021 Legislative Session ended on April 30, giving Governor Ron DeSantis until June 30 to sign bills that passed both chambers into law. The PSC's Legislative Affairs team monitored key bills, as well as the State of Florida's Budget for fiscal year 2021-2022, which was approved by the Governor on June 2. Below are FPSC Legislative highlights and key budget items.

## BILLS

**House Bill 1311**, this bill will allow the FPSC to close hearings to discuss confidential information and also permits Commissioners, FPSC staff, and parties involved in a hearing, the ability to thoroughly ask questions about confidential information that may affect the outcome of a case. The bill was signed by the Governor on June 4.

**Senate Bill 1944**, known as the "pole" bill will subject utility and communication poles to FPSC jurisdiction and will provide the FPSC with additional staff positions to manage the regulation and enforcement of redundant poles and other pole issues in Florida. The bill has not been presented to the Governor at this time.

**House Bill 1051**, revises the definition of "environmental compliance costs" in the Florida Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act (FFECA) to include costs or expenses incurred by an electric utility after July 1, 2021, for the construction and operation of a wastewater reuse system and will allow Florida utilities to petition the PSC for cost recovery dollars for various construction and operating related costs. The bill has not been presented to the Governor at this time.

**Senate Bill 896**, expands the term "renewable energy," and adds the terms "biogas" and "renewable natural gas" to Florida statutes. The bill also includes the provision that the PSC may approve cost recovery by a public gas utility for renewable natural gas purchase contracts in which the pricing provisions exceed the current market price of natural gas, but which are otherwise deemed reasonable and prudent by the Commission. Finally, the bill also requires solar facilities to be a permitted use in all agricultural land use categories in a local government's comprehensive plan and all agricultural zoning districts within an unincorporated area. The bill has not been presented to the Governor at this time.

## BUDGET

The Florida Leads budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 totals \$101.5 billion after Governor DeSantis vetoed over \$1.5 billion of which \$1.35 billion was Federal dollars. \$36.3 billion of the total budget is allocated to General Revenue. Florida's total reserves are \$9.5 billion, more than 9 percent of the total budget for the fiscal year.

The budget allocates more than \$415 million for Everglades restoration projects, \$36 million for the modernization of Florida's Reemployment Assistance application system, and \$37.5 million to various state agencies to enhance information technology security measures statewide to help protect Florida against the ongoing and evolving nature of cyber threats.

In an effort to address the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the budget also includes \$326 million to continue Florida's response efforts and allocates \$74 million for the Job Growth Grant Fund to support local infrastructure and job training projects targeted towards economic recovery and development.

The Florida PSC budget was fully funded at \$27,850,696 and granted the agency a net gain of 3 positions for an overall total of 274 FTE. Our Legislative Affairs team is gearing up for the 2022 Legislative Session and will continue to participate and monitor any and all legislative actions affecting the FPSC and Florida.