



Week Four, April 3, 2006

By David Gluckman

Week four is over and nothing has cleared up much from last week. There are reports that some bills are being set up as trading material between the houses but no one seems to be sure which ones and who wants them. I would imagine with midsession showing up next week, things should get a little clearer. To this point, leadership in both houses have been willing to wait things out as they normally do but I wouldn't be surprised if they will have to be taken in hand and direction given. With so many new members in the House with little experience, it shouldn't surprise me that they continue to pop up with strange and mysterious issues that are usually squelched as the older members realize how out of control things are. Since term limits kicked in, this tendency has accelerated each year. On the other hand, I might be more sensitive this year because both House and Senate leaders are more laid back than I'm used to. There is also that delicate question of when should next year's leaders start taking over. I guess if things get too rowdy, that will happen sooner rather than later.

The most contentious issue continuing from last week has been the North Florida wetlands permitting bills (ERP) (H 7163, S 1602) that everyone from our side opposes. We've had good press coverage and a consistent position in opposition. Unless the unequal property rights provision is reinserted, local governments are allowed to be more stringent and a few other measures, this bill will continue to be opposed. Senator Lawson's very good constitutional amendment to equalize the millage in the water management districts passed the Senate Environment Protection committee this week, but with no House companion and a solidly opposed North Florida delegation, it has little chance.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's penalties bills (S 2202, H 471) moved a step closer to passage with its amendment in the Senate Environment Protection committee this week. Senator Baker's bill was amended to reflect the better House version.

The formation of the Department of Interior with its Commissioner as a cabinet level officer (H 7129; S 2680) did not move again this week. My prediction is that this bill will have another hearing (maybe) and then pass on into oblivion. The concept is too big, the opposition is too great and the support too small. Though it has a number of intriguing aspects that should be fully debated, I don't really expect it. No one can accuse Rep. Needleman of not thinking big. Unfortunately for him, "big" doesn't seem to have much place in this session. Particularly when there hasn't been any real attempt to gather the various interests and settle disputes before hand. Much of this comes from the same lack of experience shown throughout the rest of the House. Complicated and important issues rarely make it through when they're introduced during the session. Too many important players devote their time to concrete issues they're hired to support or kill and not get involved in those they don't. Neither this issue nor the Sovereign Lands issue has been mentioned by any of the big players who would be in the middle of things if they thought it was serious. In fact, most of these folks would have sent out major alerts so potential clients would hire them. I've always enjoyed watching the hearing rooms where an important issue is raised for the first time with very few in the room and the next time where seating becomes a premium because all of those people have been hired to support or kill something. So far nothing like that has occurred, so I deduct that the lobbyists don't think these bills are even worth while churning for clients.

The Keys Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC) bills by Rep. Sorenson HB 1299 and Sen. Bennett SB 2098 will continue to move this week in the face of overwhelming environmental opposition (and agency support?). The bills make it easier to remove the Keys growth issues from review of the Governor and Cabinet. Though it saddens me to say this, I expect only a major hurricane or two will settle this issue for real. Then, of course, the realtors will just swim over and put up the for sale signs on the rubble and start over. I doubt if there is any place in the country where development has so overwhelmed the carrying capacity of the

land that there are no longer any real solutions. The only questions left are how much of the resources will be lost to pollution and how to build next time.

The Senate DRI bill (S – 1020, H 683) continues to move with the House bill much better than the Senate for a change. I hate working on this issue with the same faces wanting to kill the program with a thousand cuts (they don't want it gone because they make too much money charging developers or lobbying for another cut or two). One day we'll let it sink into oblivion as it deserves. Unfortunately, the last time we agreed to this in the mid 1990's, the same folks repealed the repealer the next year. Stop me if you've heard this before.

The venomous snake bill (H 1459, S 990) that has greater penalties and more protection for the natural systems to prevent introduction of poisonous and other exotic snakes is moving along in both houses. Some one remembered the gator exploding from a Burmese python that made the news last summer.

HOUSE AND SENATE BILLS 2006

H 23 – Bicycle Safety – Altman - Jordan; S 188 - King
H 189 – Naming Bob Martinez center - DEP - Allen; S 162 - Fasano
H 257 – Save Our Everglades Trust - Meador; S 150 - Sanders
H 265 – Hunting lands replacement - Brown; S 430 - Argenziano
H 261 – Florida Incentive Based Permitting - Stansel; S 2510 - Haridopolos
H 313 – Discharges from gambling boats - Allen; S 732 - Haridopolos
H 341– Citrus Hernando waterways council Dean; S 496 - Argenziano
H 431 – Substation siting - Littlefield; S 980 - Alexander
H 471 – FWC penalties – Troutman; S 2202 - Baker
HM 509 – Oil drilling memorial to Congress - Seiler; S 406 - Jones
HM 539 – Memorial to Congress on Indian River Lagoon Restoration - Harrell
H 559 – WMD election of board members - Brummer; S 2148 - Fasano
H 683 – DRI rule revisions– Traviesa; S 1020 - Bennett
H 693 – Florida Springs Protection Act - Stansel; S 2538 Argenziano
H 705 – Surplus state lands – Littlefield; S 1512 - Fasano
H 733 – Airboat regulations – Dean; S 1958 - Aronberg
H 749 – Septic Tanks – growth management - Bowen; S 1874 - Argenziano
H 889 – Fran Reich Aquatic Preserve - Machek
H 1015 – Agricultural enclaves - Pickens; S 1880 Argenziano
H 905 – Transportation Concurrency Management - Goodlette; S 1862 - Saunders
H 1023 – FRDAP funding-boundless playgrounds; S 1892 - Margolis
H 1029 – Firearms in National Forest; S1546 - Posey
H 1155 – Contaminated drycleaning accident - Evers; S 2174 – Peaden
H 1249 – Apalachicola River restoration - Kendrick; S 1208 – Lawson
H 1259 – Transmission siting act revisions - Coley; S 2164 – Aronberg
H 1299 – Florida Keys ACSC removal - Sorensen; S 2098 - Bennett
H 1343 – Advanced funding for Florida Forever - COE wetlands delegation – Williams; S 2544– Dockery
H 1347 – Babcock Ranch purchase - Williams; S 1226 - Dockery; S 2102 – Babcock Ranch management - Bennett
H 1345 – Saltwater fisheries – Crabs-Lobsters - Littlefield; S 2490 - Argenziano
H 1431 – Impact fees - Cretul; S 1196 - Constantine
H 1459 – Reptiles – Poppell; S 990 - Posey
H 1471 – Energy diversity act – Attikinson; S 2494 - Baker
H 1485 – House Growth Management; S 1858 – Growth Management Glitch bill - Committee on Community Affairs
H 7129 – Department of Interior – HEP; S 2680 - Posey
H 7131 – Brownfields/Redevelopment – House EP Committee; S 1092 - Constantine
H 7133 – DEP – Litter and debris – hurricanes – HEP Committee; S 1528 - Committee on Environmental Protection
H 7163 – North Florida ERP – HEP; S 1602 - Lawson