



# LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The results of the 2016 Legislative Session will prove to be a major victory for the City of Stuart. A highlight of the 2016 session includes Gov. Rick Scott's approval of funding for Everglades restoration. Fortunately, many other legislative items supported by the City were passed by the Florida Legislature and most measures opposed by the City were stopped in the committee process. The City of Stuart is happy to report this success and thanks the local Legislative Delegation in working diligently for our community.

***It's a good day for the River***  
The City of Stuart thanks Senator Joe Negron and Representative Gayle Harrell for their hard work and monumental effort in securing funding to help improve our water quality!

## LEGACY FLORIDA

In 2014, 75% of Florida voters voted in favor of Amendment 1, which sets aside 33% of all Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) dollars for land acquisition and land management including water and conservation areas. This trust fund gains revenue through an excise tax on documents within the State and has been historically utilized for a variety of purposes. In 2016, Senator Negron and Representative Harrell led an initiative to dedicate no less than \$200 million or 25% of LATF dollars for Everglades restoration and critical improvements to water sources, including conservation areas, parks, and wildlife habitats affecting 8 million Florida residents including those of Stuart. HB 989 titled "Legacy Florida," passed the Legislature and fulfills the promise of Amendment 1 in providing a dedicated funding source for Everglades restoration within this trust fund.

## FRACKING

Home rule - the bedrock of local government, was threatened by legislation first introduced in 2015 allowing the regulation of fracking in the State of Florida. This legislation would have stripped local governments of the power to regulate or ban fracking, a controversial practice proven to be extremely dangerous to the environment and the health and welfare of the general public. Stuart joined dozens of cities and counties in the State to oppose this legislation which died in session thanks to our collaborative efforts.

## Top Priorities

**SB 1168 / HB 989**

**Legacy Florida**

**SB 318**

**Fracking**

**SB 416**

**Relocation of Utilities**

**HB 93**

**Law Enforcement Body Cameras**

**HB 479**

**Special Districts**

**HB 7059**

**Municipal Elections**

**HB 7025**

**At-risk Vessels**

**SB 256**

**Communication Services Tax**



From left to right: Representative Gayle Harrell, Commissioner McDonald (Stuart), Community Services Director Jim Chrulski (Stuart), City Manager Paul Nicoletti (Stuart)



From left to right: Commissioner Troy McDonald (Stuart), Commissioner Tod Mowery (St. Lucie County), Council member Michelle Berger (Port St. Lucie)



# Legislative Roundup

## 2016 Legislative Session

### BILLS OF INTEREST



From left to right: Patricia Christensen (Treasure Coast League of Cities), Council President Ann Kagdis (Ocean Breeze), Commissioner Tom Campenni (Stuart), Representative Gayle Harrel, Commissioner Vincent N. Barile (Sewall's Point)



From left to right: Portia McDonald, Ann Scott, Governor Scott, Commissioner Troy McDonald (Stuart)

#### **SB 416** **Relocation of Utilities**

Unfortunately, for local governments in the State of Florida, this bill shifts the burden of utility relocation costs within a utility easement from the utility company to the local government and as a consequence, the taxpayer. The City of Stuart would be minimally impacted by this bill in the near future, but is concerned this new law goes against over 100 years of common law practice and sets a bad legal precedent by shifting future costs to taxpayers rather than the utility.

#### **SB 1222 / HB 1015** **Law Enforcement Body Cameras**

In 2016, the Legislature took up a similar proposal that will require local police agencies to develop their own policies and procedures for the use and safe-keeping of video records. The City of Stuart is in the 10% minority of agencies in the State that utilize these body cameras and will be reviewing new policies and procedures to parallel the new legal requirements.

#### **HB 479** **Special Districts**

Although not supported by the City of Stuart, this bill passed the Legislature with strong legislative approval as it provides a minimum website and online posting requirement for tentative and adopted special district budgets. Tentative budgets will now be online for 45 days prior to adoption and 2 years after. The City is making every effort to ensure we adhere to these new posting requirements.

#### **HB 7059** **Municipal Elections**

This bill would have forced local governments across the State to modify their elections to fall on the same date as other counties and cities. By preempting to the State, local governments would be forced to hold new recall elections in order to accommodate the new law, cutting short the terms of local officials and passing off an undo burden to cities like Stuart, also costing the taxpayers additional funds.

#### **HB 7025** **At-Risk Vessels**

The Legislature passed this bill to provide law enforcement agencies with the authority to declare a vessel 'derelict' upon meeting certain criteria. The bill also provides a mechanism for owner fines if the vessel is declared "at risk" and the owners ignore warnings to comply with law. The City of Stuart supported this bill as did many other local governments hoping to keep the waterways cleaner and safer in the future.

#### **SB 256** **Communications Services Tax (CST)**

In 2015, a bill was introduced that would cut in half, the revenue generated from the communication services tax for local governments, who for public purposes, have historically relied on this income as a means of funding projects or offsetting other general revenue expenses. In 2016, a similar bill was introduced however, it died early in committee thanks to strong opposition from local governments.

### Other Bills Tracked

**HB 427**  
**Vessel Registration**

**HB 1325**  
**Impact Fees**

**SB 124 / HB 95**  
**Public Private Partnerships**

**SB 1158**  
**Vacation Rentals**

**SB 456 / HB 345**  
**Firefighter Cancer Disability**

**HB 1361**  
**Growth Management**

**HB 221**  
**Out of Network Health Insurance**

