

The Dean Document

2012 Legislative Session

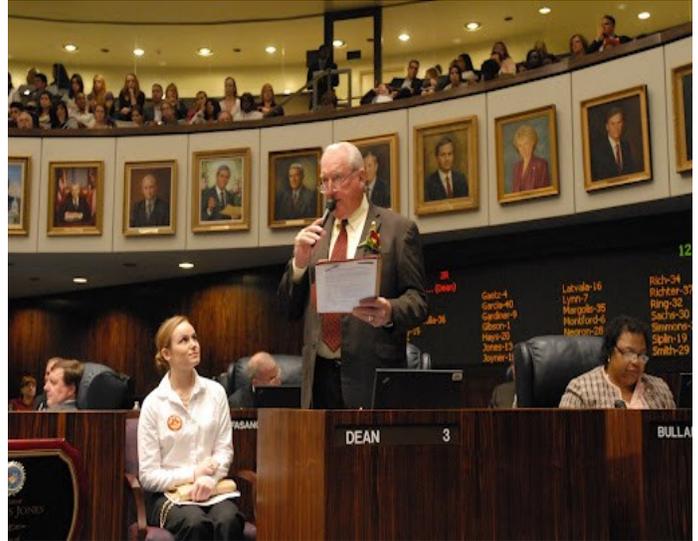
As week five draws to an end, it brings us past the halfway point of the 2012 Legislative Session. The week kicked off with students from FSU visiting the Capitol to observe the legislative process. I had the pleasure of having a young lady, Ms. Kristen Connors (pictured at right), shadow me on Tuesday. I am pleased to know our future is in the hands of bright young people like Kristen.

Week five was also a week filled with budget debates and discussions. I was very excited to see the Florida House of Representatives pass their budget, especially with provisions which would keep Jefferson Correctional Institution from being closed. As for the Senate, budget subcommittees went to work with the budget allocations they received this week. Now we will go to work on the full budget beginning next week.

Thursday saw a lot of action with the passage of several significant bills. Senate Bill 820, a bill relating to septic tanks, passed favorably out of the Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services Appropriations. SB 820 now advances to its final committee stop in the Budget Committee. Likewise, Senate Bill 802, a bill pertaining to premises liability, passed out of the Judiciary Committee and is now headed to its final stop in the Budget Committee. Also on Thursday, I was very pleased to present and help pass Senate Bill 2060, which allows DEP to create clean water standards for the State of Florida. SB 2060 was drafted in response to the costly measure handed down from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency in 2009. This bill, renumbered HB 7051, will now go to Governor Rick Scott to be signed into law. Last, but certainly not least, the Senate passed the new redistricting maps received from the House this week.

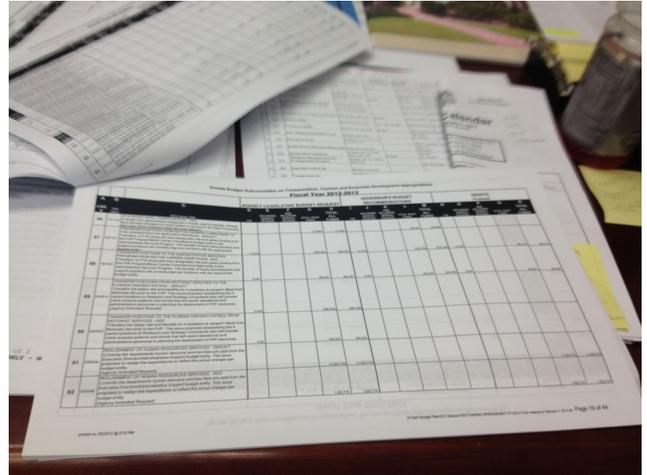
Thank you again for your comments and concerns as we continue the 2012 Legislative Session.

Sincerely,



Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development Appropriations Makes Budget Recommendations

This week, the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development Appropriations wrapped up its final meeting with an appropriations recommendation to be sent to the Budget Chairman, Senator Alexander. After three meetings this week, the committee gave their support to Chair Benacquisto. The final proposal for the committee is a \$10.4 billion budget.



One issue Senator Dean adamantly fought for was continual funding for the regional planning council. Regional planning councils help cities and counties in their immediate area promote and initiate economic opportunities. “Those counties which are considered rural areas of economic concern need as much help as possible during our current economic atmosphere,” said Senator Dean, “and regional planning councils are a solid step towards helping them. We must continue to fund important programs like this and not turn our backs on them.”

Another vital program Senator Dean wanted to see properly funded was state aid to libraries. Since Senator Dean was elected to the Florida Legislature, he has protested any decrease in funding to libraries. The Senator exclaimed, “Libraries are not only crucial to the education of our children, but are also very important to the local communities. Without funds from this committee, many libraries would not be able to keep their lights on and would close. This scenario is unacceptable.” For his support during the 2011 Legislative Session, the Florida Library Association recognized Senator Dean for his outstanding support.

The Florida Senate has not yet released a full budget proposal, but is expected to do so very soon. Senator Dean is very excited to see the entire budget and says he will not move on his position of funding projects important to his district.

Senate Bill 2060 Numeric Nutrient Criteria Sent to the Governor

The Florida Senate this week unanimously passed Senate Bill 2060 relating to numeric nutrient criteria in Florida's water bodies. SB 2060 supports the state's right to direct and establish its own set of scientific criteria for its water bodies. Sponsored by the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee, chaired by Senator Charlie Dean, SB 2060 supports proposed state water quality rules replacing controversial federal rules which would be difficult and costly to meet.

Water quality standards in the United State's Environment Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water Act requires each state to assign designated uses to all water bodies in the state. This act also sets the criteria that will maintain or be used to attain the designated use. In April of 2011, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) filed a petition with the EPA initiating rule development for state standards and requesting the EPA rescind its determination to promulgate numeric nutrient criteria in Florida and its promulgated criteria.

The EPA's standards would hold Florida's drainage canals to the same water quality standards as our lakes and rivers," said Dean. "It is an unreasonable expectation and an unreasonable cost to our state." SB 2060 now heads to Governor Rick Scott for his signature. For more details on this bill and others moving through the legislative process, visit www.flsenate.gov.

Property Fraud Continues Path to the Floor in the House of Representatives

The House Companion to Senator Dean's Senate Bill 996, House Bill 1331, passed its final committee before moving on to the House floor for a vote. Representative Wood, the sponsor to House Bill 1331, has yet to receive a vote against House Bill 1331. "I am very pleased to see how swiftly House Bill 1331 made it through its committee stops and am looking forward to having Senate Bill 996 do the same," said Senator Dean.

Senate Bill 996 would make it a third degree felony for a person to file or cause papers to be filed, in regards to real or personal property, with the intent of defrauding another person. A third degree felony is subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 and up to five years in prison. The next committee stop for Senate Bill 996 is the Criminal Justice Committee.

