

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Regulated Industries Committee

BILL: SB 680

INTRODUCER: Senator Bogdanoff

SUBJECT: Residential Properties

DATE: January 21, 2012 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Oxamendi	Imhof	RI	Pre-meeting
2.	_____	_____	JU	_____
3.	_____	_____	BC	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill revises several provisions related to the governance of condominium, cooperative, and homeowners' associations.

The bill would prohibit the enforcement of the Phase II Firefighter's Service requirement for existing elevators until the elevator is replaced or the elevator requires major modification. This requirement permits the operation and exclusive control of an elevator by firefighters for evacuating the physically disabled in occupied buildings and for moving firefighters and equipment during an emergency.

The bill prohibits the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (department) from publishing a community association manager licensee's personal home address unless it is for the purpose of satisfying a public records request.

Regarding condominiums, the bill:

- Clarifies that broadcast notice by closed-circuit television may be made in lieu of a notice posted physically on the condominium property.
- Clarifies that the board must main a copy of a board member's post election certification for at least five years or the duration of the board member's tenure, whichever is longer;
- Revises the hurricane protection provisions to reference code-compliant doors, impact glass, code-compliant windows and doors, and other types of code-compliant hurricane protection and clarifies the conditions for receiving credit for the prior installation of hurricane protection;

- Extends from seven years to ten the period for completion of all phases of a phase condominium;
- Provides for the creation of a secondary condominium within a primary condominium;
- Permit officers or full-time employees of the condominium ombudsman's office to engage in another profession or any other business that is not directly or indirectly related, or conflicts with, his or her work in the ombudsman's office; and
- Extends the period to be classified as a bulk buyer or bulk assignee from July 1, 2012, to July 1, 2015.

Regarding cooperative associations, the bill expands the types of official records that are not accessible to members of the association, including specified personal identifying information;

Regarding homeowners' associations, the bill includes the personnel records of the management company among the records that are not accessible to the association's members;

Regarding condominium and homeowners' associations, the bill provides that a unit owner is jointly and severally liable with the previous owner for not only all unpaid assessments, but also late fees, interest, costs, and reasonable attorney fees incurred by the association in an attempt to collect all funds that came due up to the time of transfer of title.

Regarding cooperative and homeowners' associations, the bill:

- Requires newly elected or appointed board members to provide a post-election certification that they have read the governing documents of the association, or alternatively, to submit a certification showing the satisfactory completion of the educational curriculum within one year before the election or 90 days after the election or appointment; and
- Provides a process for amending association documents without the approval of all mortgagees;

Regarding condominium, cooperative, and homeowners' associations, the bill:

- Requires that any challenge to the election process must be commenced within 60 days after the election results are announced;
- Prohibits election recalls when there are less than 60 days before the next election; and
- Provides that the suspension of an owner's rights does not apply to limited common elements that are intended to be used only by that owner, common elements needed to access the unit or home, utility services to the unit or home, parking spaces, or elevators, and that suspended interests are not needed for establishing a quorum, conducting an election, or to obtaining member approval;

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2012.

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 399.02, 468.433, 718.112, 718.113, 718.115, 718.116, 718.303, 718.403, 718.5011, 718.707, 719.104, 719.1055, 719.106, 719.303, 720.303, 720.305, 720.306, and 720.3085. The bill creates section 718.406, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Elevator Regulation

Chapter 399, F.S., which may be cited as the “Elevator Safety Act,”¹ establishes minimum standards for elevator safety. The Bureau of Elevator Safety (bureau) of the Division of Hotels and Restaurants (division) within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (department) is the agency charged with enforcing the provisions of ch. 399, F.S. The department has rulemaking authority to enforce the provisions of ch. 399, F.S.² The Elevator Safety and Technical Advisory Council (advisory council) within the department provides technical assistance to the division.³ It makes recommendations regarding the rules for the operation, maintenance, servicing, construction, alteration, installation, and inspection of vertical conveyances.

The term “elevator” includes a wide variety of mechanical devices, including escalators, dumbwaiters, moving walks, inclined stairway lifts, and inclined or vertical wheelchair lifts.⁴ As of August 1, 2011, there were 47,331 licensed elevators in the state.⁵

Section 399.02(1), F.S., requires the Elevator Safety Code to be the same as or similar to the code established by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).⁶ This ASME codes provide the minimum model standards for the installation, operation, and maintenance of elevators. The ASME codes are meant to be adopted by the state and local agencies with jurisdiction over elevator safety. Standard ASME A17 serves as the basis for the Florida Elevator Safety Act and Florida Elevator Safety Code.

The elevator safety code establishes minimum requirements that provide a reasonable degree of safety for the general public and the safe operation of conveyances. For example:

- ASME A17.1 (2004), provides requirements related to the installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, inspections, and testing to ensure the minimum safety requirements for *new and existing elevators*.
- ASME A17.2 (2004), provides a guide for the inspection of elevators, escalators, and moving walks.⁷

¹ See s. 399.001, F.S.

² See s. 399.10, F.S.

³ See s. 399.1061, F.S. The Elevator Safety and Technical Advisory Council consists of eight members appointed by the secretary of the department who meet the following criteria: one representative from a major elevator manufacturing company or its authorized representative; one representative from an elevator servicing company; one representative from a building design profession; one representative of the general public; one representative of a local government in this state; one representative of a building owner or manager; one representative of labor involved in the installation, maintenance, and repair of elevators; and one representative who is a certified elevator inspector from a private inspection service.

⁴ Section 399.01(6), F.S.

⁵ See *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2010-2011*, Division of Hotels and Restaurants, Department of Business and Professional Regulation. A copy is available at: http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/hr/reports/annualreports/documents/ar2009_10.pdf (Last visited March 1, 2011). (Last visited January 5, 2012).

⁶ The ASME standards specified in s. 399.02(1), F.S., are ASME A17.1, A17.3, and A18.1.

⁷ ASME A17.2 (2004). The bureau has adopted and incorporated by reference in rule 61C-5.001(1)(b), F.A.C.

- ASME A17.3 (1996) is a code for existing elevators to ensure rider safety. The code provision specifically states that it is intended to guide *retroactive requirements for existing elevators*.

The elevator safety code requires that any alteration, relocation or reclassification of an existing elevator, also be in compliance with the edition of the Florida Building Code that is in effect at the time of receipt of the construction permit application to alter, relocate, or change classification.⁸ Specifically ASME A17.3, requires owners of existing elevators to retrofit elevators to comply with revisions or updates to the code.

For existing elevators in condominiums or multi-family dwellings, including those that are a part of a licensed continuing care facility licensed under ch. 651, F.S., or a retirement community with apartments, s. 399.02(9), F.S., prohibits the enforcement of the Phase II Firefighters' Service requirements, as amended into ASME A17.1 and A17.3. The Phase II Firefighter's Service requirements permit the operation and exclusive control of an elevator by firefighters for evacuating the physically disabled in occupied buildings and for moving firefighters and equipment during an emergency.⁹ The Phase II Firefighters' Service requirements cannot be enforced until July 1, 2015, or until the elevator is replaced or requires major modification before July 1, 2015. This subsection does not restrict the elevator owner's ability to apply for a variance from the Phase II Firefighters' Service or the division's ability to issue variances. This subsection requires the division to adopt rules to administer the exemption.

According to the department, the Division of Hotels and Restaurants is in the rulemaking process to define the term "major modification."

Community Association Management

Community association managers are regulated and licensed pursuant to part VIII of ch. 468, F.S. To be licensed, a community association manager must satisfactorily complete an examination for licensure. Per s. 455.229(1), F.S., the information supplied on the application for a community association manager's license is public information. According to the department, most applicants supply their home address as contact information for the department.¹⁰

Condominiums

A condominium is a "form of ownership of real property created pursuant to [ch. 718, F.S.] which is comprised entirely of units that may be owned by one or more persons, and in which there is, appurtenant to each unit, an undivided share in common elements."¹¹ A condominium is

⁸ Rule 9B-3.047, F.A.C., which incorporates the Florida Building Code, including ASME A17.1 and A17.3,⁸ into the Elevator Safety Code, and requires that existing elevators be maintained according to the current safety standards in the Florida Building Code and the Florida Elevator Safety Code.

⁹ Rule 3.11.3, A.S.M.E. A17.3 (1996 edition). On October 1, 2005, ASME A17.3 (1996) was first adopted in the 2004 Florida Building Code as the code for the inspection and maintenance of existing elevators.⁹ On April 2, 2008, the bureau adopted the ASME elevator standards that were incorporated in ch. 30, Florida Building Code.

¹⁰ *Bill Analysis for SB 680*, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Business and Professional Regulation, October 17, 2011.

¹¹ Section 718.103(11), F.S.

created by recording a declaration of condominium in the public records of the county where the condominium is located.¹² A declaration is like a constitution in that it:

strictly governs the relationships among condominium unit owners and the condominium association. Under the declaration, the Board of the condominium association has broad authority to enact rules for the benefit of the community.¹³

A declaration may include covenants and restrictions concerning the use, occupancy, and transfer of the units permitted by law with reference to real property.¹⁴ A declaration of condominium may be amended as provided in the declaration. If the declaration does not provide a method for amendment, it may generally be amended as to any matter by a vote of not less than the owners of two-thirds of the units.¹⁵ Condominiums are administered by a board of directors referred to as a “board of administration.”¹⁶

Division of Florida Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes

Condominiums are regulated by the Division of Florida Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes (division) within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (department) in accordance with ch. 718, F.S.

The division is afforded complete jurisdiction to investigate complaints and enforce compliance with ch. 718, F.S., with respect to associations that are still under developer control.¹⁷ The division also has the authority to investigate complaints against developers involving improper turnover or failure to turnover, pursuant to s. 718.301, F.S. After control of the condominium is transferred from the developer to the unit owners, the division’s jurisdiction is limited to investigating complaints related to financial issues, elections, and unit owner access to association records pursuant to s. 718.111(12), F.S.

As part of the division’s authority to investigate complaints, s. 718.501(1), F.S., provides the division with the power to subpoena witnesses, take sworn statements from witnesses, issue cease and desist orders, and impose civil penalties (fines) against developers and associations.

Post-Election Certification of Condominium Board Members

Association bylaws requirements are outlined in s. 718.112, F.S. Section 718.112(2)(d)3.b., F.S., outlines a post-election certification requirement for newly elected board members. Pursuant to this section, within 90 days of being elected or appointed, a new board member must certify that he or she:

- Has read the declaration of condominium for all condominiums operated by the association and the association’s articles of incorporation, bylaws, and current written policies;

¹² Section 718.104(2), F.S.

¹³ *Neuman v. Grandview at Emerald Hills*, 861 So. 2d 494, 496-97 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003) (internal citations omitted).

¹⁴ Section 718.104(5), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 718.110(1)(a), F.S. *But see*, exceptions to the subject matter and procedure for the amendment of a declaration of condominium in s. 718.110(4) and (8), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 718.103(4), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 718.501(1), F.S.

- Will work to uphold such documents and policies to the best of his or her ability; and
- Will faithfully discharge his or her fiduciary responsibility to the association's members.

As an alternative to a written certification, the newly elected or appointed director may submit a certificate of satisfactory completion of the educational curriculum within one year before the election or 90 days after the election or appointment.¹⁸ The curriculum must be administered by a condominium education provider approved by the division.¹⁹ A certification is valid and does not have to be resubmitted as long as the director continuously serves on the board.

A board member is suspended from service on the board until he or she files the written certification or submits a certificate of completion of the educational curriculum. If a suspension occurs, the board may temporarily fill the vacancy during the period of suspension. The secretary of the association must keep the written certification or educational certificate for inspection by the members for five years after a director's election or appointment. The validity of any action by the condominium board is not affected by the association's failure to have the certification on file.

Condominium, Cooperative, and Homeowners' Associations-Voting Interests

For condominium associations, s. 718.103(30), F.S., defines the term "voting interests" to mean:

the voting rights distributed to the association members pursuant to s. 718.104(4)(j). In a multicondominium association, the voting interests of the association are the voting rights distributed to the unit owners in all condominiums operated by the association. On matters related to a specific condominium in a multicondominium association, the voting interests of the condominium are the voting rights distributed to the unit owners in that condominium.

For cooperative associations, s. 719.103(28), F.S., defines the term "voting interests" to mean "the voting rights distributed to the association members as provided for in the articles of incorporation." For homeowners' association, the term "voting interests" is defined in s. 720.301(13), as "the voting rights distributed to the members of the homeowners' association, pursuant to the governing documents."

Condominium, Cooperative, and Homeowners' Associations-Recall of Board Members

Section 718.112(2)(j), F.S., outlines the procedure for the recall of board members. Any member of the board may be recalled and removed from office by a majority of all of the voting interests. If a recall is approved by a majority of all voting interests at a meeting or by an agreement in writing, the board must notice and hold a board meeting within 5 business days in order to either certify the recall or not. If the board fails to duly notice and hold a board meeting within 5 business days, the recall will be deemed effective. Recall disputes are subject to arbitration by

¹⁸ The department's Internet site provides a listing of approved educational providers. See Division of Florida Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes, *Approved Education Providers*, located at <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/lsc/condominiums/ApprovedEducationProviders.html> (Last visited January 23, 2012).

¹⁹ Section 718.112(2)(d)3.b., F.S.

the division under s. 718.1255, F.S., which relates to the arbitration and mediation of disputes between condominium associations and members.

Comparable provisions for the recall of the board members of cooperative associations are provided in s. 719.106(1)(g), F.S., and board members of homeowners' associations in s. 720.303(10), F.S.

Condominiums-Hurricane Protection

Section 718.113(5), F.S., specifies the condominiums' powers and duties in regards to the installation and maintenance of hurricane protection. A condominium association must adopt hurricane shutter specifications for each building within each condominium operated by the association. The board may, subject to approval by a majority of the voting interests, install hurricane shutters, impact glass, code-compliant windows, or other types of hurricane protection. The association is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of other hurricane protection for the property if the association is responsible the maintenance of such property under the declaration of condominium. The association may operate the hurricane shutters without the permission of the unit owners only if such operation is necessary to protect the association and condominium property.

Section 718.115(1)(e), F.S., provides that the installation, replacement, operation, repair, and maintenance of hurricane shutter and other hurricane protection are a common expense, unless otherwise specified in the declaration of condominium. Unit owners who previously installed their own hurricane protection are entitled to a credit equal to the pro rata portion of the assessed installation cost assigned to each unit and for the pro rate share of expenses for hurricane protection installed on common elements and association property.

Condominium – Assessments and Foreclosures

Current law defines an "assessment" as the "share of the funds which are required for the payment of common expenses, which from time to time is assessed against the unit owner."²⁰

"Special assessment" is defined to mean "any assessment levied against a unit owner other than the assessment required by a budget adopted annually."²¹

A unit owner is jointly and severally liable with the previous owner for all unpaid assessments that come due up to the time of transfer of title.²² This liability is without prejudice to any right the owner may have to recover from the previous owner the amounts paid by the owner.²³

If a first mortgagee, (e.g., the mortgage lending institution) or its successor or assignee, acquires title to a condominium unit by foreclosure or by deed in lieu of foreclosure, the first mortgagee's liability for unpaid assessments is limited to the amount of assessments that came due during the 12 months immediately preceding the acquisition of title or one percent of the original mortgage

²⁰ Section 718.103(1), F.S.

²¹ Section 718.103(24), F.S.

²² Section 718.116(1)(a), F.S.

²³ *Id.* The term "without prejudice" means "without loss of any rights; in a way that does not harm or cancel the legal rights or privileges of a party." Black's Law Dictionary 770 (2d pocket ed. 2001).

debt, whichever is less.²⁴ However, this limitation applies only if the first mortgagee joined the association as a defendant in the foreclosure action.²⁵ This gives the association the right to defend its claims for unpaid assessments in the foreclosure proceeding. A first mortgagee who acquires title to a foreclosed condominium unit is exempt from liability for all unpaid assessments if the first mortgage was recorded prior to April 1, 1992.²⁶ The successor or assignee, in respect to the first mortgagee, includes only a subsequent holder of the first mortgage.²⁷

Section 718.116(3), F.S., provides for the accrual of interest on unpaid assessments. Unpaid assessments and installments on assessments accrue interest at the rate provided in the declaration from the due date until paid. The rate may not exceed the rate allowed by law.²⁸ If no rate is specified in the declaration, the interest accrues at the rate of 18 percent per year.²⁹ The association may also charge an administrative late fee of up to the greater of \$25 or five percent of each installment of the assessment for each delinquent installment for which the payment is late.³⁰ Payments are applied first to the interest accrued, then the administrative late fee, then to any costs and attorney's fees incurred in collection, and then to the delinquent assessment.³¹

Condominium – Sanctioning Unit Owners

Section 718.303(3), F.S., provides for the assessment of fines for failure to comply with any provision of the declaration, the association's bylaws, or reasonable rules of the association by a unit owner, or a unit owner's tenant, guest, or invitee. A fine may not exceed \$100 per violation, but may be levied on each day of a continuing violation.³² A fine does not become a lien on the property. Before a fine may be imposed, notice and an opportunity for a hearing must be provided. A fine against a unit owner may not in the aggregate exceed \$1,000.

Section 718.303(3)(a), F.S., provides that the association may suspend, for a reasonable period of time, the use rights of a unit owner, or a unit owner's tenant, guest, or invitee for failure to comply with any provision of the declaration, the association bylaws, or reasonable rules of the association. This provision does not specify whether the association can suspend the right to use limited common elements intended to be used only by that unit, common elements that must be used to access the unit, utility services provided to the unit, parking spaces, or elevators.

Section 718.303(5), F.S., authorizes condominium associations to suspend a unit owner's use rights if the unit owner is delinquent for more than 90 days in the payment of a monetary obligation to the association. A suspension ends upon full payment of all obligation currently due or overdue to the association. The voting interest or consent right of a suspended unit owner may not be counted toward the total number of voting interests for any purpose, including, but are not limited to, the number of voting interests necessary to constitute a quorum, conduct an election,

²⁴ Section 718.116(1)(b), F.S.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Section 718.116(1)(e), F.S.

²⁷ Section 718.116(1)(g), F.S.

²⁸ Section 687.02(2), F.S., prohibits as usurious interest rates that are higher than the equivalent of 18 percent per annum simple interest.

²⁹ Section 718.116(3), F.S.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² Section 718.303(3), F.S.

or approve an action. It also provides that the notice and hearing requirement for fines in s. 718.303(3), F.S., do not apply to suspensions under this subsection.

The suspension provisions in s. 718.303, F.S., are substantially similar to the suspension provisions in the bill for cooperatives in s. 719.303, F.S., and for homeowners' associations in s. 720.305, F.S.

Phase Condominiums

Section 718.403, F.S., permits developers to develop condominiums in phases if the anticipated phases are described in detail in the original declaration of condominium or an amendment to the declaration which has been approved by all the unit owners and unit mortgagees. The time for completion of all the phases may not exceed seven years from the date of the recording of the declaration of condominium.

Condominium Ombudsman

Section 718.5011, F.S., provides for the appointment of a condominium ombudsman by the Governor. The ombudsman acts as a liaison between the division, unit owners, boards of directors, board members, community association managers, and other affected parties. The ombudsman develops policies and procedures to assist in the understand of the rights and responsibilities set forth in ch. 718, F.S., and the condominium documents governing their respective association. The ombudsman also monitors and reviews procedures and disputes concerning condominium elections or meetings, and may recommend to the division whether to pursue enforcement action where there is reasonable cause to believe that election misconduct has occurred. The ombudsman may also make recommendations to the division for changes in rules and procedures for the filing, investigation, and resolution of complaints filed by unit owners, associations, and managers. The ombudsman may also assist in the resolution of disputes.

Section 718.5011(2), F.S., prohibits any officer or full-time employee of the ombudsman's office cannot actively engage in any other business or profession.

Distressed Condominium Relief Act

The "Distressed Condominium Relief Act" in part VII of ch. 718, F.S., defines the extent to which successors to the developer, including the construction lender after a foreclosure and other bulk buyers and bulk assignees of condominium units, may be responsible for implied warranties.

Section 718.703(1), F.S., defines the term "bulk assignee" to mean a person who acquires more than seven condominium parcels in a single condominium as provided in s. 718.707, F.S., and receives an assignment of some or substantially all of the rights of the developer as an exhibit in the deed or as a separate instrument recorded in the public records in the county where the condominium is located.

Section 718.703(2), F.S., defines the term "bulk buyer" as a person who acquires more than seven condominium parcels in a single condominium but who does not receive an assignment of developer rights other than the rights specified in this section.

Section 718.704, F.S., provides for the assignment and assumption of developer rights. It provides that a bulk assignee assumes all the duties and responsibilities of the developer, and specifies the matter for which the bulk assignee is not liable.

Section 718.707, F.S., specifies a time limit for classification as a bulk assignee or bulk buyer. A person acquiring condominium parcels may not be classified as a bulk assignee or a bulk buyer unless the parcels were acquired prior to July 1, 2012. The date of acquisition is based on the date that the deed or other instrument of conveyance is recorded.

Cooperative Associations

Section 719.103(12), F.S., defines a “cooperative” to mean:

that form of ownership of real property wherein legal title is vested in a corporation or other entity and the beneficial use is evidenced by an ownership interest in the association and a lease or other muniment of title or possession granted by the association as the owner of all the cooperative property.

A cooperative differs from a condominium because, in a cooperative, no unit is individually owned. Instead, a cooperative unit’s occupants receive an exclusive right to occupy the unit. The cooperative holds the legal title to the unit and all common elements. The cooperative association may assess costs for the maintenance of common expenses.³³

Cooperatives – Sanctioning Unit Owners

Section 719.303(3), F.S., permits cooperative associations to levy reasonable fines against unit owners for failure to comply with the cooperative documents or rules of the association. Fines may not exceed \$100 per violation and may not become a lien against the unit. The fine may be levied on the basis of each day of a continuing violation. A fine may not exceed \$1,000 in the aggregate.

Homeowners’ Associations

Florida law provides statutory recognition to corporations that operate residential communities in this state and procedures for operating homeowners’ associations, and protects the rights of association members without unduly impairing the ability of such associations to perform their functions.³⁴

A “homeowners’ association” is defined as a “Florida corporation responsible for the operation of a community or a mobile home subdivision in which the voting membership is made up of parcel owners or their agents, or a combination thereof, in which membership is a mandatory condition of parcel ownership, and which is authorized to impose assessments that, if unpaid, may become a lien on the parcel.”³⁵ Unless specifically stated to the contrary, homeowners’ associations are also governed by ch. 617, F.S., relating to not-for-profit corporations.³⁶

³³ See ss. 719.106(1)(g) and 719.107, F.S.

³⁴ See s. 720.302(1), F.S.

³⁵ Section 720.301(9), F.S.

³⁶ Section 720.302(5), F.S.

Homeowners' associations are administered by a board of directors whose members are elected.³⁷ The powers and duties of homeowners' associations include the powers and duties provided in ch. 720, F.S., and in the governing documents of the association, which include recorded declaration of covenants, bylaws, articles of incorporation, and duly adopted amendments to these documents.³⁸ The officers and members of a homeowners' association have a fiduciary relationship to the members who are served by the association.³⁹

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Elevators

The bill amends s. 399.02(9), F.S., to extend the enforcement exemption by deleting the July 1, 2015, end date for the Phase II Firefighters' Service exemption. The bill maintains the requirement that elevators must comply with Phase II Firefighters' Service when they are replaced or the elevator requires major modification.

Community Association Managers-Licensure laws Examination

The bill amends s. 468.433(5), F.S., relating to the licensure by examination of community association managers, to provide that the department may not publish a licensee's personal home address unless it is for the purpose of satisfying a public records request.

Condominium –Meetings of Unit Owners

Amends s. 718.112(2)(d)3., F.S., to clarify that broadcast notice on a closed-circuit television system may be made in lieu of a notice posted physically on the condominium property.

Condominiums-Elections

The bill amends s. 718.112(2)(d)4.b., F.S., relating to the post-election certification of condominium board members, to clarify the board must maintain a copy of the written certification for inspection by members for 5 years or the duration of the board member's tenure, whichever is longer. The bill provides a comparable requirement for cooperative associations in s. 719.106(1)(d)1.b., F.S., and homeowners' associations in s. 720.306(9)(d), F.S.

The bill creates s. 718.112(2)(d)4.c., F.S., to require that any challenge to the election process must be commenced within 60 days after the election results are announced. This conforms with the bill's amendment to s. 719.106(1)(d)1.b., F.S. relating to challenges to the election's process for cooperative associations.

The bill creates s. 718.112(2)(j)5., F.S., which relates to the recall of board members, to provide that, if the board fails to notice and hold the required meeting to certify the recall or fails to file the required recall petition, the unit owner representative⁴⁰ may file a petition pursuant to s. 718.1255 challenging the board's failure to act. The bill requires that the petition must be filed

³⁷ See ss. 720.303 and 720.307, F.S.

³⁸ See ss. 720.301 and 720.303, F.S.

³⁹ Section 720.303(1), F.S.

⁴⁰ Rule 61B-23.0027(3)(b)1., F.A.C., requires that a unit owner representative must be elected or appointed by the presiding officer at a recall meeting of the board "to receive pleadings (e.g., copies of a petition for recall arbitration; motions), notices, or other papers on behalf of the recalling unit owners in the event the board disputes the recall."

within 60 days after the expiration of the applicable 5-full-business-day period.⁴¹ The division's review of a petition would be limited to the sufficiency of service on the board and the facial validity of the written agreement or ballots filed.

The bill creates s. 718.112(2)(j)7. and 8., F.S., to revise the procedure for recall disputes. Section 718.112(2)(j)7., F.S., provides that a board member who has been recalled may file a petition pursuant to s. 718.1255, F.S., to challenge the validity of a recall. The petition must be filed within 60 days after the recall is deemed certified⁴² and the association and the unit owner representative must be named as the respondents.

Section 718.112(2)(j)8., F.S., provides that the division may not accept a recall petition for filing when there are 60 or fewer days until the next scheduled reelection of the board member sought to be recalled or when 60 or fewer days have elapsed since the election of the board member sought to be recalled.

The amendment to s. 718.112(2)(j), F.S., is comparable to bill's board member recall limitations provided in s. 719.106(1)(f), F.S., for cooperatives and in s. 720.303(10)(g), F.S., for homeowners' associations.

Condominiums- Hurricane Protection

The bill amends the hurricane protection provisions in s. 718.113(5), F.S., to reference code-compliant doors, impact glass, code-compliant windows and doors, and other types of code-compliant hurricane protection.

The bill amends s. 718.115(1)(e), F.S., relating to the common expenses for hurricane protection, to reference impact glass, code-compliant windows and doors, and other types of code-compliant hurricane protection.

It also amends s. 718.115(1)(e), F.S., to clarify that the credit would be received when the shutters are installed. It provides that unit owners who previously installed impact glass or code-compliant windows or doors that comply with the current applicable building code are entitled to receive a credit when that hurricane protection is installed. It provides that unit owners who have installed other types of code-compliant hurricane protection that comply with the current applicable building code are also entitled to receive a credit when the same type of other code-compliant hurricane protection that was installed.

The bill deletes the reference to laminated glass architecturally designed to function as hurricane protection.

Condominiums-Assessments

The bill amends s. 718.116(1)(a), F.S., to provide that a unit owner is jointly and severally liable with the previous owner not only for all unpaid assessments, but also late fees, interest, costs, and reasonable attorney fees incurred by the association in an attempt to collect all funds that

⁴¹ The board has 5 business days to certify the recall or file a petition challenging the recall. If the board fails to act within the 5 days, the recall is deemed effective.

⁴² *Id.*

came due up to the time of transfer of title. The bill provides a comparable provision for homeowners' associations in s. 720.3085(2)(b), F.S.

Condominiums-Sanctioning Owners and Occupants

The bill amends s. 718.303(3), F.S., to provide that unit owner suspension of rights does not apply to limited common elements that are intended to be used only by that unit, common elements needed to access the unit, utility services to the unit, parking spaces, or elevators. It amends s. 718.303(5), F.S., to provide that the number needed to establish a quorum, conduct an election, or to obtain member approval is reduced by the number of suspended voting or consent rights.

The bill provides similar provisions for the suspension of rights in ss. 719.303(3) and (5), F.S., for cooperative associations and s. 720.305(2)(a) and (5) for homeowners' associations.

Phase Condominiums

The bill amends s. 718.403(1), F.S., to permit condominium to extend the seven year period for completion of all phases of a phase condominium. The extension must be by an amendment to the declaration approved by the unit owners. An amendment to extend the seven year period may be submitted for approval only during the last three years of the 7-year period. The amendment must describe the time period in which all phases will be completed, but such period may not exceed 10 years from the date of the recording of the original declaration of condominium. An amendment to extend the 7-year period is not subject to the limitations in s. 718.110(4), F.S.⁴³

Creation of condominiums with Condominium Parcels

The bill creates s. 718.406, F.S., to provide for the creation of condominiums within a condominium parcel. This provision addresses the relationship between the primary condominium and the secondary condominium units. Section 718.406(3), F.S., provides that, unless the declaration of condominium of the primary condominium provides otherwise, the consent of the primary condominium unit owners to the creation of the secondary condominium is not required. Section 718.406(4), F.S., provides that, where the consent of the primary condominium association is required to create a secondary condominium, only the approval of a majority of the board of directors of the primary condominium association shall be required unless the primary condominium declaration provides otherwise. Section 718.406(5), F.S., provides that a unit owner in a secondary condominium is governed by both the declaration of condominium for the primary condominium and the declaration of the second condominium.

Section 718.406(6), F.S., provides that the primary condominium may be responsible for the insurance of both the primary and secondary condominium if the primary condominium declaration permits. Section 718.406(7), F.S., provides that the board of directors of the primary

⁴³ In pertinent part, s. 718.110(4), F.S., prohibits amendments that materially alter or modify the appurtenances to the unit, or change the proportion or percentage by which unit owners share the common expenses own the common surplus, and which provides that the acquisition of property by the association and material alterations or substantial additions to such property or the common elements do not constitute a material alteration or modification of the appurtenances to the units. In current law, s. 718.110(4), F.S., also provides that a declaration recorded after April 1, 1992, may not require the approval of less than a majority of total voting interests of the condominium for amendments under this subsection, unless otherwise required by a governmental entity.

condominium association may adopt hurricane shutter specifications for both the primary and secondary condominium.

Section 718.406(8), F.S., provides that an owner or mortgagee of a unit in a secondary condominium must register with the primary condominium to receive notice of a foreclosure action at against the secondary condominium. If registered, the primary condominium association must give at least 30 days notice before instituting a foreclosure action. It provides for the payment by the registered owner of the unit of their proportional share of the amount of delinquent assessments attributable to the unit. The primary association must release the unit in the secondary condominium from any such delinquency upon such payment. Alternatively, the registered owner may pay all delinquent assessments and seek reimbursement of the amounts paid from the secondary association.

Section 718.406(9), F.S., provides that the primary declaration controls any conflict between the primary and secondary condominium declarations. Section 718.406(10), F.S., provides that common expenses due to the primary condominium from the secondary condominium are a common expense of the secondary condominium.

Condominium Ombudsman

The bill amends s. 718.5011(2), FS, to permit officers or full-time employees of the ombudsman's office to engage in another profession or any other business that is not directly or indirectly related, to or conflicts with, his or her work in the ombudsman's office.

Distressed Condominium Relief Act

The bill amends s. 718.707, FS, to extend the period to be classified as a bulk buyer or bulk assignee from July 1, 2012, to July 1, 2015.

Cooperative-Official Records

The bill amends s. 719.104(2)(c), F.S., relating to the official records of the cooperative association to add the following information to the list items that are not accessible to members of the association:

- Records protected by the lawyer-client privilege as provided in s. 90.502, F.S. and work product privilege;
- Personnel records of association employees, such as disciplinary, payroll, health, and insurance records. However, the unit owners would have access to written employment agreements with an association employee or budgetary or financial records that indicate the compensation paid to an association employee;
- Social security numbers, driver license numbers, credit card numbers, email addresses, telephone numbers, emergency contact information, and any addresses of a unit owner that are not provided to fulfill the association's notice requirements, and other identifying personal information except for the person's name, unit designation, mailing address, and property address;
- Electronic security measures used to safeguard data, including passwords; and
- Software and operating systems used by the association which allow manipulation of data.

Amendment of Cooperative Documents

The bill creates s. 719.1055, F.S., to provide the legislative findings that procurement of consent or joinder to amendments that do not materially affect the rights or interests of mortgagees is unreasonable and is a substantial burden on cooperative unit owners and associations. The bill provides that there is a compelling state interest in enabling cooperative association members to approve amendments. This provision would facilitate attempts by cooperative shareholders to amend their documents without the approval of all mortgagees when a change to the association documents doesn't adversely affect the mortgagee's rights or interests.

The bill limits the enforceability of any mortgage or any provision in declarations, articles of incorporation, or bylaws of a condominium association recorded on or after July 1, 2012, or amendments thereto, that require the consent or joinder of some or all mortgagees of units or any other portion of the cooperative property for those mortgages. Any such provisions or amendments recorded prior to July 1, 2012, would remain enforceable. As to provisions or amendments created after July 1, 2012, the bill provides that provisions requiring consent or joinder are enforceable only as to provisions that adversely affect the priority of the mortgagee's lien or the mortgagee's right to foreclose its lien or that otherwise materially affect the rights and interests of the mortgagees.

The bill provides a process for obtaining addresses of mortgagees and contacting them to obtain their consent or joinder. The association may rely upon the public records to identify the holders or outstanding mortgages. It may also rely on the address in the original recorded mortgage document unless there is a different address in the in a recorded assignment or modification of the mortgage.

Failure of any mortgagee to respond to a request for the consent or joinder to a proposed amendment within 60 days after the date that a request is sent to the mortgagee is deemed to have consented to the amendment.

For any amendments that require mortgage consent after July 1, 2012, the consent must be evidenced by an affidavit of the association recorded in the public records of the county in which the declaration is recorded.

An amendment may be voidable by any mortgagee who was entitled to notice and an opportunity to consent. An action to void an amendment is subject to a 5 year statute of limitations from the date of discovery or the date of recordation. This provision applies to all mortgages, regardless of the date of recordation of the mortgage.

There is a comparable provision for the amendment of condominium documents in s. 718.110(11), F.S. The bill provides a similar provision for homeowners' associations in s. 720.306(1)(d), F.S.

Cooperatives-Elections Process Challenges

The bill amends s. 719.106(1)(d)1.b., F.S., to require that any challenge to the election process must be commenced within 60 days after the election results are announced.

This provision is similar to the bill's amendment to s. 718.112(2)(d)4.c., F.S., relating to challenges to the election's process for condominium associations and s. 720.306(9)(a), F.S., for homeowners' associations.

Post-Election Certification of Cooperative Board Members

The bill creates s. 719.106(1)(d)1.b., F.S., to provide a post-election certification requirement for newly elected board members. Pursuant to this section, within 90 days of being elected or appointed, a new board member must certify that he or she:

- Has read the association's bylaws, articles of incorporation, proprietary lease, and current written policies;
- Will work to uphold such documents and policies to the best of his or her ability; and
- Will faithfully discharge his or her fiduciary responsibility to the association's members.

As an alternative to a written certification, the newly elected or appointed director may submit a certificate of satisfactory completion of the educational curriculum within one year before the election or 90 days after the election or appointment. The curriculum must administered by a condominium education provider approved by the division.⁴⁴ A certification is valid and does not have to be resubmitted as long as the director continuously serves on the board.

A board member is suspended from service on the board until he or she files the written certification or submits a certificate of completion of the educational curriculum. If a suspension occurs, the board may temporarily fill the vacancy during the period of suspension. The secretary of the association must keep the written certification or educational certificate for inspection by the members for 5 years after a director's election or appointment, or the duration of director's uninterrupted tenure, whichever is greater. The validity of any action by the condominium board is not affected by the association's failure to have the certification on file.

This provision is similar to the post-election certification requirement for condominium board members provided in s. 718.112(2)(d)4.b., F.S., as amended by this bill. The bill provides a comparable requirement for homeowners' associations in s. 720.306(9)(d), F.S.

Cooperatives-Recall Elections

The bill creates s. 719.106(1)(f), F.S., which relates to the recall of board members, to provide that, if the board fails to notice and hold the required meeting to certify the recall or fails to file the required recall petition, the unit owner representative may file a petition pursuant to s. 719.1255, F.S., challenging the board's failure to act. The bill requires that the petition must be filed within 60 days after the expiration of the applicable 5-full-business-day period. The division's review of a petition would be limited to the sufficiency of service on the board and the facial validity of the written agreement or ballots filed.

The bill creates s. 719.106(1)(f)7. and 8., F.S., to revise the procedure for recall disputes. Section 719.106(1)(f)7., F.S., is amended to provide that a board member who has been recalled may file a petition pursuant to s. 719.1255, F.S., to challenge the validity of a recall. The petition

⁴⁴ Section 718.112(2)(d)3.b., F.S.

must be filed within 60 days after the recall is deemed certified and the association and the unit owner representative must be named as the respondents.

Section 719.106(1)(f)8., F.S., provides that the division may not accept a recall petition for filing when there are 60 or fewer days until the next scheduled reelection of the board member sought to be recalled or when 60 or fewer days have elapsed since the election of the board member sought to be recalled.

These provisions are similar to the bill's board member recall limitations provided in s. 718.112(2)(j), F.S., for condominiums, and in s. 720.303(10)(g), F.S., for homeowners' associations.

Cooperative-Sanctioning Owners and Occupants

The bill amends s. 719.303(3), F.S., to provide that unit owner suspension of rights does not apply to limited common elements that are intended to be used only by that unit, common elements needed to access the unit, utility services to the unit, parking spaces, or elevators. It amends s. 719.303(5), F.S., to provide that the number needed to establish a quorum, conduct an election, or to obtain member approval is reduced by the number of suspended voting or consent rights.

The bill provides similar provisions for the suspension of rights in ss. 718.303(3) and (5), F.S., for condominium associations and ss. 720.305(2)(a) and (5), F.S., for homeowners' associations.

Homeowners' Associations-Official Records

The bill amends s. 720.303, F.S., to include the personnel records of the management company among the records that are not accessible to the association's members. Current law only references the personnel records of the association.

Homeowners' Associations-Recall Elections

The bill creates s. 720.303(10)(g), F.S., to provide that, if the board fails to notice and hold the required meeting to certify the recall or fails to file the required recall petition, the unit owner representative may file a petition pursuant to s. 718.1255, F.S., to challenge the board's failure to act. The bill requires that the petition must be filed within 60 days after the expiration of the applicable 5-full-business-day period. The division's review of a petition would be limited to the sufficiency of service on the board and the facial validity of the written agreement or ballots filed.

The bill creates ss. 720.303(10)(k) and (l), F.S., to revise the procedure for recall disputes. Section 720.303(10)(k), F.S., is amended to provide that a board member who has been recalled may file a petition pursuant to ss. 718.112(2)(j) and 718.1255, F.S., to challenge the validity of a recall. The petition must be filed within 60 days after the recall is deemed certified and the association and the unit owner representative must be named as the respondents.

Section 720.303(10)(l), F.S., provides that the division may not accept for filing a recall petition when there are 60 or fewer days until the next scheduled reelection of the board member sought to be recalled or when 60 or fewer days have elapsed since the election of the board member sought to be recalled.

These provision are similar to the bill's board member recall limitations provided in s. 718.112(2)(j), F.S., for condominiums, and in s. 719.106(1)(f), F.S., for cooperative associations.

Homeowners' Associations-Sanctioning Owners and Occupants

The bill amends s. 720.305(2), F.S., to provide that unit owner suspension of rights does not apply to limited common elements that are intended to be used only by that unit, common elements needed to access the unit, utility services to the unit, parking spaces, or elevators. It amends s. 720.305(2)(a), F.S., to provide that the number needed to establish a quorum, conduct an election, or to obtain member approval is reduced by the number of suspended voting or consent rights.

The bill provides similar provisions for the suspension of rights in ss. 718.303(3) and (5), F.S., for condominium associations and ss. 719.303(3) and (5), F.S., for cooperative associations.

Amendment of Homeowner Association Documents

The bill creates s. 720.306(1)(d), F.S., to provide the legislative findings that procurement of consent or joinder to amendments that do not materially affect the rights or interests of mortgagees is unreasonable and is a substantial burden on homeowners' and associations. The bill provides that there is a compelling state interest in enabling homeowners' association members to approve amendments. This provision would facilitate attempts by homeowners to amend their documents without the approval of all mortgagees when a change to the association documents doesn't adversely affect the mortgagee's rights or interests.

The bill limits the enforceability of any mortgage or any provision or amendment to declarations, articles of incorporation, or bylaws of a homeowners' association recorded on or after July 1, 2012, or amendments thereto, that require the consent or joinder of some or all mortgagees of units or any other portion of the association property for those mortgages. Any such provisions or amendments recorded prior to July, 2012, would remain enforceable. As to provisions or amendments created after July 1, 2012, the bill provides that provisions requiring consent or joinder are enforceable only as to provisions that adversely affect the priority of the mortgagee's lien or the mortgagee's right to foreclose its lien or that otherwise materially affect the rights and interests of the mortgagees.

The bill provides a process for obtaining addresses of mortgagees and contacting them to obtain their consent or joinder. The association may rely upon the public records to identify the holders or outstanding mortgages. It may also rely on the address in the original recorded mortgage document unless there is a different address in a recorded assignment or modification of the mortgage.

Failure of any mortgagee to respond to a request for the consent or joinder to a proposed amendment within 60 days after the date that a request is sent to the mortgagee is deemed to have consented to the amendment.

For any amendments that require mortgage consent after July 1, 2012, the consent must be evidenced by an affidavit of the association recorded in the public records of the county in which the declaration is recorded.

An amendment may be voidable by any mortgagee who was entitled to notice and an opportunity to consent. An action to void an amendment is subject to a 5 year statute of limitations from the date of discovery or the date of recordation. This provision applies to all mortgages, regardless of the date of recordation of the mortgage.

There is a comparable provisions for the amendment of condominium documents in s. 718.110(11), F.S. The bill provides a similar provision for cooperative associations in s. 720.306(1)(d), F.S.

Homeowners' Associations-Elections Process Challenges

The bill amends s. 720.306(9)(a), F.S., to require that any challenge to the election process must be commenced within 60 days after the election results are announced.

This provision is similar to the bill's amendment to s. 718.112(2)(d)4.c., F.S., relating to challenges to the election's process for condominium associations and s. 719.106(1)(d)1.b., F.S., for cooperative associations.

Post-Election Certification of Homeowners' Association Board Members

The bill creates s. 720.306(9)(d), F.S., to provide a post-election certification requirement for newly elected board members. Pursuant to this section, within 90 days of being elected or appointed, a new board member must certify that he or she:

- Has read the declaration of covenants' conditions and restrictions operated by the association and the association's articles of incorporation, bylaws, and current written policies;
- Will work to uphold such documents and policies to the best of his or her ability; and
- Will faithfully discharge his or her fiduciary responsibility to the association's members.

As an alternative to a written certification, the newly elected or appointed director may submit a certificate of satisfactory completion of the educational curriculum within one year before the election or 90 days after the election or appointment. The curriculum must be administered by a condominium education provider approved by the division.⁴⁵ A certification is valid and does not have to be resubmitted as long as the director continuously serves on the board.

A board member is suspended from service on the board until he or she files the written certification or submits a certificate of completion of the educational curriculum. If a suspension occurs, the board may temporarily fill the vacancy during the period of suspension. The secretary of the association must keep the written certification or educational certificate for inspection by the members for 5 years after a director's election or appointment, or the duration of director's uninterrupted tenure, whichever is greater. The validity of any action by the condominium board is not affected by the association's failure to have the certification on file.

This provision is similar to the post-election certification requirement for condominium board members provided in s. 718.112(2)(d)4.b., F.S., as amended by this bill. The bill provides a comparable requirement for cooperative associations in s. 719.106(1)(d)1.b., F.S.

⁴⁵ Section 718.112(2)(d)3.b., F.S.

Homeowners' Associations-Assessments

The bill amends s. 720.3085(2)(b), F.S., to provide that a home owner is jointly and severally liable with the previous owner for not only all unpaid assessments, but also late fees, interest, costs, and reasonable attorney fees incurred by the association in an attempt to collect all funds that came due up to the time of transfer of title. The bill provides a comparable provision for condominiums in s. 718.116(1)(a), F.S.

Effective Date

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2012.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Newly elected or appointed members of cooperative and homeowners' association may incur costs related to completion of an educational curriculum within one year before the election or 90 days after the election or appointment, as provided in ss. 719.106(1)(d)1.b., and 720.306(9)(d), F.S..

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
