

Committee on Transportation

CS/SB 1126 — Department of Transportation

by Appropriations Committee and Senator Harrell

The bill contains a number of revisions to current law relating to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) including:

- Adds road and bridge maintenance or construction vehicles to the list of vehicles subject to the Move Over Law.
- Increases from \$275 to \$300 million the authorized dollar amount representing an alternative debt service cap on Right-of-Way Acquisition and Bridge Construction Bonds issued to finance or refinance the cost of acquiring real property for state roads or the cost of bridge construction.
- Removes the expiration date for the Legislative Budget Commission chair and vice chair's authority to approve amendments to the FDOT's work program that transfer fixed capital outlay appropriations between categories or increase an appropriation category.
- Clarifies that the Department of Revenue is the entity responsible for transferring a portion of documentary stamp tax revenues distributed to the State Treasury and credited to the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) from the State Treasury to the General Revenue Fund.
- Revises from October 1 to August 1 the date for metropolitan planning organization (MPO) annual submissions of project priorities to the FDOT districts for purposes of developing the FDOT's tentative work program and MPO transportation improvement programs.
- Removes provisions requiring the FDOT to provide space and video conference capability at each FDOT district office for persons requesting a hearing before the Commercial Motor Vehicle Review Board, instead requiring the FDOT to allow such persons to appear remotely before the board via communications media technology already authorized by Administration Commission rule.
- Grants the FDOT rulemaking authority for the purpose of implementing statutory provisions relating to airport zoning.
- Revises provisions relating to a notice and hearing the FDOT is required to provide when a transportation project on the State Highway System modifies an existing access to an abutting property owner to provide clarity and improve readability.
- Removes obsolete references to a previously expired general service revenue service charge from specified collected revenue deposited into the STTF.

The bill also repeals the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program and related provisions and instead creates programs related to arterial highway projects. More specifically, the bill:

- Authorizes the FDOT to upgrade existing arterial roadways with targeted improvements, such as adding new tolled or non-tolled limited access alignments to manage congestion points and retrofitting roadways with tolled or non-tolled grade separations that provide alternatives to a signalized intersection for through traffic.

- Prohibits reduction of any non-tolled general use lanes of an existing facility, requires maintenance of existing access points, and limits the location of any tolling points such that a non-tolled alternative exists for local traffic.
- Provides that all existing applicable requirements relating to FDOT or turnpike projects apply to any projects undertaken. Further, the FDOT and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise must take into consideration the guidance and recommendations of any previous studies or reports relevant to the projects.
- Directs the FDOT to develop by December 31, 2035, and include in the work program construction of controlled access facilities to achieve free flow of traffic on U.S. 19 and requires the facility to be developed using existing or portions of existing roadway by specified improvements.
- Directs the FDOT to identify and include in the work program projects to widen certain two lane arterial rural roads serving high volumes of truck traffic to four lanes.
- Directs the FDOT to begin the project development and environmental phase for a project to extend the Florida Turnpike from its current terminus in Wildwood to a terminus as determined by the FDOT, and to submit a summary report by December 31, 2022.

The revenue redirected to the STTF as a result of the 2019 M-CORES legislation is retained in the STTF and is dedicated for purposes of funding the authorized controlled access facility projects and widening projects on arterial rural highways. Additionally, beginning July 1, 2023, the distribution of \$35 million to the FTE for feeder roads and related projects is discontinued; such funds will remain in the STTF to support statewide transportation priorities.

Except as otherwise provided, this act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 115-0