By the Committees on Governmental Oversight and Productivity; Comprehensive Planning; and Senator Bennett

302-2511-03

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A bill to be entitled An act relating to prompt payment for construction services; amending s. 218.70, F.S.; providing a short title; amending s. 218.72, F.S.; redefining terms used in part VII of ch. 218, F.S.; amending s. 218.735, F.S.; revising provisions relating to timely payment for purchases of construction services; revising deadlines for payment; providing procedures for project closeout and payment of retainage; providing requirements for local government construction retainage; providing that ss. 218.72-218.76, F.S., apply to the payment of any payment request for retainage; creating s. 255.0705, F.S.; providing a short title; amending s. 255.071, F.S.; revising deadlines for the payment of subcontractors, sub-subcontractors, materialmen, and suppliers on construction contracts for public projects; creating ss. 255.072, 255.073, 255.074, 255.075, 255.076, 255.077, 255.078, F.S.; providing definitions; providing for timely payment for purchases of construction services by a public entity; providing procedures for calculating payment due dates; providing procedures for handling improper payment requests; providing for the resolution of disputes; providing for project closeout and payment of retainage; providing for public-construction retainage; providing that ss. 255.072-255.076, F.S., apply to the payment

of any payment request for retainage; amending s. 255.05, F.S.; providing requirements for certain notices of nonpayment served by a claimant who is not in privity with the contractor; providing limitations on a claimant's institution of certain actions against a contractor or surety; providing for certain notices to the claimant; providing an effective date.

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Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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Section 1. Section 218.70, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

14 218.70 Popular name Short title. -- This part may be 15

Section 2. Subsections (2), (6), and (7) of section 218.72, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

cited as the "Local Government Florida Prompt Payment Act."

218.72 Definitions.--As used in this part:

- (2) "Local governmental entity" means a county or municipal government, school board, school district, authority, special taxing district, other political subdivision, community college, or any office, board, bureau, commission, department, branch, division, or institution thereof or any project supported by county or municipal funds.
- "Vendor" means any person who sells goods or services, sells or leases personal property, or leases real property directly to a local government entity.
- (7) "Construction services" means all labor, services, and materials provided in connection with the construction, 31 alteration, repair, demolition, reconstruction, or any other

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improvements to real property that require a license under parts I and II of chapter 489.

Section 3. Subsection (6) of section 218.735, Florida Statutes, is amended, present subsection (7) of that section is redesignated as subsection (9), and new subsections (7) and (8) are added to that section, to read:

218.735 Timely payment for purchases of construction services.--

(6) When a contractor receives payment from a local governmental entity for labor, services, or materials furnished by subcontractors and suppliers hired by the contractor, the contractor shall remit payment due to those subcontractors and suppliers within 10 15 days after the contractor's receipt of payment. When a subcontractor receives payment from a contractor for labor, services, or materials furnished by subcontractors and suppliers hired by the subcontractor, the subcontractor shall remit payment due to those subcontractors and suppliers within 10 15 days after the subcontractor's receipt of payment. Nothing herein shall prohibit a contractor or subcontractor from disputing, pursuant to the terms of the relevant contract, all or any portion of a payment alleged to be due to another party. In the event of such a dispute, the contractor or subcontractor may withhold the disputed portion of any such payment if the contractor or subcontractor notifies the party whose payment is disputed, in writing, of the amount in dispute and the actions required to cure the dispute. The contractor or subcontractor must pay all undisputed amounts due within the time limits imposed by this section.

(7)(a) Each contract for construction services between a local government entity and vendor must provide for the

development of a list of items required to render complete, satisfactory, and acceptable the construction services purchased by the local government. The contract must specify the process for the development of the list, including responsibilities of the local government and vendor in developing and reviewing the list and a reasonable time for developing such list as follows:

- 1. For construction projects with an estimated cost less than \$10 million, within 30 days after reaching substantial completion of the construction services purchased as defined in the contract, or, if not defined in the contract, upon reaching beneficial occupancy or use; or
- 2. For construction projects with an estimated cost of \$10 million or more, within 30 days, unless otherwise extended by contract not to exceed 90 days, after reaching substantial completion of the construction services purchased as defined in the contract, or, if not defined in the contract, upon reaching beneficial occupancy or use.
- (b) If the contract between the local government entity and vendor relates to the purchase of construction services on more than one building or structure, or involves a multiphased project, the contract shall provide for the development of a list of items required to render complete, satisfactory, and acceptable the construction services purchased for each building, structure, or phase of the project in accordance with the timeframes specified in subparagraph (a)1. or subparagraph (a)2.
- (c) The failure to include any corrective work or pending items not yet completed on the list developed pursuant to this subsection shall not alter the responsibility of the

vendor to complete all the purchased construction services as defined in the contract.

- (d) Upon completion of all items on the list, or such other time defined in the contract, the vendor may submit a payment request for the appropriate amount of retainage. The local government may withhold an amount not to exceed 150 percent of the total costs to complete any incomplete items on the list.
- (e) All items that require correction under the contract and that are identified after the preparation and delivery of the list shall remain the obligation of the vendor as defined by the contract.
- (f) Warranty items may not affect the final payment of retainage as provided in this section or as may be provided in the contract between the vendor and its subcontractors and suppliers.
- (g) If a local government entity fails to comply with its responsibilities to develop the list required under paragraph (a) or paragraph (b), as defined in the contract, and the timeframes provided in subparagraph (a)1. or subparagraph (a)2., the vendor may submit a payment request for the appropriate amount of retainage. The local government entity shall not be required to pay or process any request for payment of retainage if the vendor has, in whole or in part, failed to cooperate with the local government in the development of the list; failed to perform its contractual responsibilities, if any, with regard to the development of the list; or if paragraph (8)(d) applies.
- (8)(a) In any public construction project, a local government entity may withhold an amount not exceeding 10 percent of each progress payment made to the vendor until the

local government project has reached 50-percent completion. After reaching 50-percent completion, the local government 2 3 must reduce to 5 percent the amount of retainage withheld from each subsequent progress payment made to the vendor. However, 4 5 notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, a 6 municipality with a population of 25,000 or fewer, or a county 7 with a population of 100,000 or fewer, may withhold retainage 8 in an amount not exceeding 10 percent of each progress payment made to the vendor until final completion and acceptance of 9 10 the project by the local government. For purposes of this 11 subsection, the term "50-percent completion" means as defined in the contract between the local government entity and the 12 vendor, or, if not defined in the contract, the point at which 13 the local government has expended 50 percent of the total 14 project costs identified in the contract, plus all change 15 orders and other additions issued subsequent to the approval 16 of the contract by the governing body of the local government, 17 and the level of actual project construction is equivalent to 18 19 such expenditure of funds. (b) After 50-percent completion, the vendor may 20 present to the local government entity a payment request for 21 up to one-half of the retainage amount held by the local 22 government. The local government entity shall promptly make 23 payment to the vendor, unless the local government has 24 25 grounds, pursuant to the contract or as provided in paragraph d), for withholding the payment of retainage. If the local 26 27 government makes payment of retainage to the vendor under this paragraph, the vendor shall timely remit payment of such 28 29 retainage to the appropriate subcontractors and suppliers. 30 (c) After 50-percent completion, the vendor may elect

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rate higher than 5 percent. The specific amount to be withheld must be determined on a case-by-case basis and must be based 2 3 on the vendor's assessment of the subcontractor's past performance, the likelihood that such performance will 4 5 continue, and the vendor's ability to rely on other 6 safeguards. The vendor shall notify the subcontractor, in 7 writing, of its determination to withhold more than 5 percent 8 of the progress payment and the reasons for making that determination, and the vendor may not request the release of 9 10 such retained funds from the local government.

- (d) Nothing in this section requires the local government to pay or release any amounts that are the subject of a good-faith dispute, the subject of an action brought pursuant to s. 255.05, or otherwise the subject of a claim or demand by the local government or vendor.
- The timeframes set forth in this section for payment of payment requests apply to any payment request for retainage made pursuant to this subsection.
- Section 4. Section 255.0705, Florida Statutes, is created to read:
- 255.0705 Short title.--Sections 255.0705-255.078 may be cited as the "Florida Prompt Payment Act."
- Section 5. Subsections (2) and (3) of section 255.071, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:
- 255.071 Payment of subcontractors, sub-subcontractors, materialmen, and suppliers on construction contracts for public projects. --
- (2) The failure to pay any undisputed obligations for such labor, services, or materials within 30 days after the date the labor, services, or materials were furnished and 31 payment for such labor, services, or materials became due, or

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within $\underline{10}$ 30 days after the date payment for such labor, services, or materials is received, whichever last occurs, shall entitle any person providing such labor, services, or materials to the procedures specified in subsection (3) and the remedies provided in subsection (4).

- (3) Any person providing labor, services, or materials for the construction of a public building, for the prosecution and completion of a public work, or for repairs upon a public building or public work improvements to real property may file a verified complaint alleging:
- (a) The existence of a contract for providing such labor, services, or materials to improve real property.
- (b) A description of the labor, services, or materials provided and alleging that the labor, services, or materials were provided in accordance with the contract.
 - (c) The amount of the contract price.
 - (d) The amount, if any, paid pursuant to the contract.
- (e) The amount that remains unpaid pursuant to the contract and the amount thereof that is undisputed.
- (f) That the undisputed amount has remained due and payable pursuant to the contract for more than 30 days after the date the labor or services were accepted or the materials were received.
- (g) That the person against whom the complaint was filed has received payment on account of the labor, services, or materials described in the complaint more than $\underline{10}$ 30 days prior to the date the complaint was filed.

Section 6. Section 255.072, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

30 <u>255.072 Definitions.--As used in ss. 255.073-255.078,</u> 31 <u>the term:</u>

1 (1) "Agent" means project architect, project engineer, 2 or any other agency or person acting on behalf of a public 3 entity. "Construction services" means all labor, services, 4 (2) 5 and materials provided in connection with the construction, alteration, repair, demolition, reconstruction, or any other 6 7 improvements to real property. The term "construction 8 services" does not include contracts or work performed for the Department of Transportation. 9 10 "Payment request" means an invoice or request for 11 payment for construction services which conforms with all statutory requirements and with all requirements specified by 12 the public entity to which the payment request is submitted. 13 (4) "Public entity" means the state, a state 14 university, or any office, board, bureau, commission, 15 department, branch, division, or institution thereof, or any 16 17 project supported by state funds, but does not include a local government entity as defined in s. 218.72. 18 19 (5) "Purchase" means the purchase of construction 20 services. 21 "Vendor" means any person providing construction 22 services directly to a public entity. Section 7. Section 255.073, Florida Statutes, is 23 24 created to read: 25 255.073 Timely payment for purchases of construction 26 services.--27 (1) Except as otherwise provided in ss. 255.072-255.078, s. 215.422 governs the timely payment for 28 29 construction services by a public entity under this act. 30

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(2) If a public entity disputes a portion of a payment request, the undisputed portion must be timely paid, in accordance with subsection (1).

(3) When a vendor receives payment from a public entity for labor, services, or materials furnished by subcontractors and suppliers hired by the vendor, the vendor shall remit payment due to those subcontractors and suppliers within 10 days after the vendor's receipt of payment. When a subcontractor receives payment from a vendor for labor, services, or materials furnished by subcontractors and suppliers hired by the subcontractor, the subcontractor shall remit payment due to those subcontractors and suppliers within 10 days after the subcontractor's receipt of payment. This subsection does not prohibit a vendor or subcontractor from disputing, pursuant to the terms of the relevant contract, all or any portion of a payment alleged to be due to another party. If such a dispute occurs, the vendor or subcontractor may withhold the disputed portion of any such payment if the vendor or subcontractor notifies the party whose payment is disputed, in writing, of the amount in dispute and the actions required to cure the dispute. The vendor or subcontractor must pay all undisputed amounts due within the time limits imposed by this section.

(4) All payments due under this section and not made within the time periods specified by this section shall bear interest at the rate of 1 percent per month, or the rate specified by contract, whichever is greater.

Section 8. Section 255.074, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

30 <u>255.074 Procedures for calculation of payment due</u> 31 <u>dates.--</u>

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proper.

1 (1) Each public entity shall establish procedures whereby each payment request received by the public entity is 2 3 marked as received on the date on which it is delivered to an agent or employee of the public entity or of a facility or 4 5 office of the public entity. (2) If the terms under which a purchase is made allow 6 7 for partial deliveries and a payment request is submitted for 8 a partial delivery, the time for payment for the partial 9 delivery must be calculated from the time of the partial 10 delivery and the submission of the payment request in the same 11 manner as provided in s. 255.073. (3) The public entity must submit a payment request to 12 the Chief Financial Officer for payment no more than 25 days 13 after receipt of the payment request. 14 Section 9. Section 255.075, Florida Statutes, is 15 created to read: 16 17 255.075 Mandatory interest.--A contract between a 18 public entity and a vendor or a provider of construction 19 services may not prohibit the collection of late payment 20 interest charges allowable under ss. 255.072-255.078. Section 10. Section 255.076, Florida Statutes, is 21 22 created to read: 255.076 Improper payment request; resolution of 23 24 disputes .--(1) If a vendor submits an improper payment request, 25 the public entity shall, within 10 days after receiving the 26 27 improper payment request, notify the vendor that the payment 28 request is improper and indicate what corrective action on the

part of the vendor is needed to make the payment request

1 (2) If a dispute occurs between a vendor and a public entity concerning payment of a payment request, the dispute 2 3 must be resolved as provided in this section. Each public entity shall establish a dispute resolution procedure to be 4 5 followed by the public entity if such a dispute occurs. The 6 procedure must provide that proceedings to resolve the dispute 7 must commence not later than 45 days after the date on which 8 the public entity received the payment request and must conclude by final decision of the public entity not later than 9 10 60 days after the date on which the public entity received the 11 payment request. Such procedures are not subject to chapter 120 and do not constitute an administrative proceeding that 12 prohibits a court from deciding de novo any action arising out 13 of the dispute. If the dispute is resolved in favor of the 14 public entity, interest charges begin to accrue 15 days after 15 the public entity's final decision. If the dispute is resolved 16 17 in favor of the vendor, interest begins to accrue as of the original date the payment became due. 18 19 (3) In an action to recover amounts due under ss. 255.072-255.078, the court shall award court costs and 20 21 reasonable attorney's fees, including fees incurred through any appeal, to the prevailing party, if the court finds that 22 the nonprevailing party withheld any portion of the payment 23 24 that is the subject of the action without any reasonable basis 25 in law or fact to dispute the prevailing party's claim to those amounts. 26 27 Section 11. Section 255.077, Florida Statutes, is 28 created to read: 29 255.077 Project closeout and payment of retainage. --30 (1) A public entity must present to the vendor a final punch list of all items required to render complete,

satisfactory, and acceptable the construction services purchased, within 30 days after the earliest of the following: 2 3 (a) Issuance of a temporary or final certificate of occupancy, if applicable; 4 5 Substantial completion of the construction 6 services purchased, as defined in the contract; or 7 Beneficial occupancy or use of the structure, 8 building, facility, or improvement that is the subject of the construction services purchased, as defined in the contract. 9 10 (2) If the purchase relates to construction services 11 on more than one building or structure, the public entity shall prepare a final punch list for each building or 12 structure. The public entity must present to the vendor a 13 14 final punch list with regard to each building or structure within 30 days after the earliest of the following: 15 Issuance of a temporary or final certificate of 16 17 occupancy on the particular building or structure, if 18 applicable; 19 (b) Substantial completion of the particular building 20 or structure, as defined in the contract; or 21 (c) Beneficial occupancy or use of the particular structure, building, facility, or improvement, as defined in 22 23 the contract. 24 Unless the contract provides otherwise, the public entity 25 shall pay out retainage to the vendor based upon the value of 26 27 the construction services rendered with regard to that structure, building, facility, or improvement as compared to 28 29 the total value of the purchase. 30 (3) Upon completion of all items on the final punch 31 list or within 30 days after issuance of the punch list,

whichever occurs sooner, the vendor shall submit a payment
request for the appropriate amount of retainage. The owner may
withhold up to 150 percent of the cost to complete any
incomplete final punchlist items. Thereafter, ss.

255.072-255.076 apply to the payment of any payment request
for retainage.

(4) If the public entity fails to present to the
vendor a final punch list within the time periods provided in

- (4) If the public entity fails to present to the vendor a final punch list within the time periods provided in subsection (1) or subsection (2), the project is considered to be complete and the vendor shall submit a payment request for the appropriate amount of retainage. Thereafter, ss.

 255.072-255.076 apply to the payment of any payment request for retainage.
- (5) All items that require correction under the contract which are identified subsequent to preparation and delivery of the final punch list must be considered warranty items or make-good items, and such items have no effect on the final payment of retainage provided in this section.

Section 12. Section 255.078, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

255.078 Public construction retainage. --

- (1) From the commencement of a public construction project that is subject to ss. 255.072-255.078 until 50-percent of the contract value has been earned, a public entity may not withhold as retainage more than 10 percent of each progress payment to the vendor. When 50-percent of the contract value has been earned, the vendor may submit a payment request to the public entity for up to one-half of the retainage withheld up to that time.
- (2) After 50-percent of the contract value has been earned, the public entity may not withhold as retainage more

than 5 percent of each progress payment to the vendor. However, the vendor may withhold retainage from payments to 2 3 its subcontractors at a rate higher than 5 percent. The 4 specific amount to be withheld must be determined on a 5 case-by-case basis and must be based on the vendor's 6 assessment of the subcontractor's past performance, the 7 likelihood that such performance will continue, and the 8 vendor's ability to rely on other safeguards. The vendor shall notify the subcontractor, in writing, of its determination to 9 10 withhold more than 5 percent of the progress payment and the 11 reasons for making that determination. 12 (3) This section does not require the payment or 13 release of amounts that are the subject of a good-faith 14 dispute. 15 (4) Sections 255.072-255.076 apply to the payment of 16 any payment request for retainage. 17 Section 13. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) is amended, and subsections (10) and (11) are added to section 18 19 255.05, Florida Statutes, to read: 255.05 Bond of contractor constructing public 20 21 buildings; form; action by materialmen. --22 (2)(a)1. If a claimant is no longer furnishing labor, services, or materials on a project, a contractor or the 23 24 contractor's agent or attorney may elect to shorten the 25 prescribed time in this paragraph within which an action to enforce any claim against a payment bond provided pursuant to 26 this section may be commenced by recording in the clerk's 27 28 office a notice in substantially the following form: 29 30 NOTICE OF CONTEST OF CLAIM 31 AGAINST PAYMENT BOND

1 2 To: ...(Name and address of claimant)... 3 4 You are notified that the undersigned contests your 5 notice of nonpayment, dated, and served 6 on the undersigned on, and that the 7 time within which you may file suit to enforce your claim is limited to 60 days after the date of service of this notice. 8 9 10 DATED on 11 12 Signed:...(Contractor or Attorney)... 13 14 The claim of any claimant upon whom such notice is served and 15 who fails to institute a suit to enforce his or her claim against the payment bond within 60 days after service of such 16 17 notice shall be extinguished automatically. The clerk shall mail a copy of the notice of contest to the claimant at the 18 19 address shown in the notice of nonpayment or most recent 20 amendment thereto and shall certify to such service on the face of such notice and record the notice. Service is complete 21 22 upon mailing. A claimant, except a laborer, who is not in privity 23 24 with the contractor shall, before commencing or not later than 25 45 days after commencing to furnish labor, materials, or supplies for the prosecution of the work, furnish the 26 contractor with a notice that he or she intends to look to the 27 28 bond for protection. A claimant who is not in privity with the 29 contractor and who has not received payment for his or her

labor, materials, or supplies shall deliver to the contractor

31 and to the surety written notice of the performance of the

labor or delivery of the materials or supplies and of the 2 nonpayment. The notice of nonpayment may be served at any time 3 during the progress of the work or thereafter but not before 45 days after the first furnishing of labor, services, or 4 5 materials, and not later than 90 days after the final 6 furnishing of the labor, services, or materials by the 7 claimant or, with respect to rental equipment, not later than 90 days after the date that the rental equipment was last on 8 9 the job site available for use. Any notice of nonpayment 10 served by a claimant who is not in privity with the contractor 11 which includes sums for retainage must specify the portion of the amount claimed for retainage. No action for the labor, 12 13 materials, or supplies may be instituted against the 14 contractor or the surety unless both notices have been given. Notices required or permitted under this section may be served 15 in accordance with s. 713.18. An action, except for an action 16 17 exclusively for recovery of retainage, must be instituted against the contractor or the surety on the payment bond or 18 19 the payment provisions of a combined payment and performance 20 bond within 1 year after the performance of the labor or completion of delivery of the materials or supplies. An action 21 exclusively for recovery of retainage must be instituted 22 against the contractor or the surety within 1 year after the 23 24 performance of the labor or completion of delivery of the materials or supplies, or within 90 days after receipt of 25 final payment (or the payment estimate containing the owner's 26 final reconciliation of quantities if no further payment is 27 28 earned and due as a result of deductive adjustments) by the 29 contractor or surety, whichever comes last. A claimant may not waive in advance his or her right to bring an action under the 30 31 | bond against the surety. In any action brought to enforce a

 claim against a payment bond under this section, the prevailing party is entitled to recover a reasonable fee for the services of his or her attorney for trial and appeal or for arbitration, in an amount to be determined by the court, which fee must be taxed as part of the prevailing party's costs, as allowed in equitable actions. The time periods for service of a notice of nonpayment or for bringing an action against a contractor or a surety shall be measured from the last day of furnishing labor, services, or materials by the claimant and shall not be measured by other standards, such as the issuance of a certificate of occupancy or the issuance of a certificate of substantial completion.

- (10) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a claimant may not institute an action for the sole purpose of recovery of retainage against the contractor or against the surety issuing a payment or performance bond pursuant to this section until:
- (a) The public entity has paid out that retainage to the contractor and the time provided under ss. 218.70-218.76 or ss. 255.072-255.078 for payment of that retainage to the claimant has expired;
- (b) The claimant has completed all work required under its contract and 90 days have passed since the owner's receipt of the contractor's last payment request; or
- (c) The claimant has made the written request to the owner provided in subsection (11) and has not timely received the requested information from the owner.
- (11) An owner shall furnish in writing to a claimant who has provided labor, services, or materials to a project, within 5 business days after receipt of a written request from that claimant, the following information:

1	(a) The dates of all payment requests received by the
2	owner from the contractor.
3	(b) The dates of all payments made by the owner to the
4	contractor.
5	(c) Whether the owner has received the contractor's
6	final payment request and, if so, the date the final payment
7	request was submitted by the contractor to the owner.
8	Section 14. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.
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10	STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
11	CS for SB 1724
12	
13	Provides time frames for developing final lists based upon cost of project. Specifies permissible local government
14	retainage procedures. Provides that a claimant may institute a claim for retainage against contractor or surety when 90,
15	rather than 60, days have passed since the owner received the last payment request. Deletes newly created s. 255.05(12),
16	F.S., that related to tolling of statute of limitations for claims against payment bonds.
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