

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 1049 Trailer Estates Fire Control District, Manatee County

SPONSOR(S): Local Administration & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee; Gregory

TIED BILLS: CS/HB 1047 **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 115 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CS/HB 1049 passed the House on March 2, 2022, and subsequently passed the Senate on March 10, 2022.

Trailer Estates Fire Control District (TEFCD) was created by special act in 1963. TEFCD serves Trailer Estates, a deed restricted community located in Bradenton.

On November 2, 2021, the electors in TEFCD voted to abolish and dissolve TEFCD and transfer the real and personal property of the district to the Trailer Estates Park and Recreation District.

The bill repeals ch. 2005-350, Laws of Florida, abolishes TEFCD and transfers all assets to the Trailer Estates Park and Recreation District.

The Economic Impact Statement filed with the bill indicates it will have a cost of \$168,000 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022 and a revenue decrease of \$94,635 for FY 2022-23.

The bill was approved by the Governor on May 16, 2022, ch. 2022-243, L.O.F., and will become effective on September 30, 2022.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Present Situation

Independent Special Fire Control Districts

An independent special fire control district is a type of independent special district¹ created by the Legislature for the purpose of providing fire suppression and related activities within the territorial jurisdiction of the district.² Chapter 191, F.S., the “Independent Special Fire Control District Act (Act),” provides standards, direction, and procedures for greater uniformity in the operation and governance of these districts, including financing authority, fiscally-responsible service delivery, and election of members to the governing boards for greater public accountability.³ The Act controls over more specific provisions in any special act or general law of local application creating an independent fire control district’s charter.⁴ The Act requires every independent fire control district be governed by a five-member board⁵ and provides for:

- General powers;⁶
- Special powers;⁷
- Authority and procedures for the assessment and collection of ad valorem taxes;⁸
- Authority and procedures for the imposition, levy, and collection of non-ad valorem assessments, charges, and fees;⁹ and
- Issuance of district bonds and evidences of debt.¹⁰

As a type of independent special district,¹¹ independent special fire control districts are also subject to applicable provisions of ch. 189, F.S., the “Uniform Special District Accountability Act.”¹²

An independent special district only possesses the powers granted by the authorizing law.¹³ Therefore, any boundary expansion must be approved by the Legislature.¹⁴ A special district may not levy ad valorem taxes without approval by the affected voters in a referendum.¹⁵

¹ A “special district” is a local government unit of special purpose, as opposed to general purpose, operate[d] within a limited boundary and created by general law, special act, local ordinance, or by rule of the Governor and Cabinet. S. 189.012(6), F.S. An “independent special district” is any special district that is not a dependent special district, which is defined as a special district in which: the membership of the governing body is identical to the governing body of a single county or municipality, all members of the governing body are appointed by the governing body of a single county or municipality, members of the special district’s governing body are removable at will during their unexpired terms by the governing body of a single county or municipality, or the district’s budget is subject to the approval of the governing body of a single county or municipality. See s. 189.012(3), F.S.

² S. 191.003(5), F.S.

³ S. 191.002, F.S.

⁴ S. 191.004, F.S. Provisions in other laws pertaining to district boundaries or geographical sub-districts for electing members to the governing board are excepted from this section. *Id.*

⁵ S. 191.005(1)(a), F.S. A fire control district may continue to be governed by a three-member board if authorized by special act adopted in or after 1997.

⁶ S. 191.006, F.S. (such as the power to sue and be sued in the name of the district, the power to contract, and the power of eminent domain).

⁷ S. 191.008, F.S.

⁸ S. 191.006(14); 191.009(1), F.S.

⁹ Ss. 191.006(11), (15), 191.009(2)-(4), 191.011, F.S.

¹⁰ S. 191.012, F.S.

¹¹ S. 191.014(1), F.S., providing that new districts are created by the Legislature pursuant to s. 189.031, F.S.

¹² S. 189.031, F.S.

¹³ *Bd. of Comm’rs of Jupiter Inlet Dist. v. Thibadeau*, 956 So. 2d 529, 531 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007). See also *Halifax Hospital Medical Center v. State of Fla., et al.*, 278 So. 3d 545, 547 (Fla. 2019).

¹⁴ S. 191.014(2), F.S. (“The territorial boundaries of [an independent special fire control] district may be modified, extended, or enlarged with the approval or ratification of the Legislature.”).

¹⁵ Art. VII, s. 9(b), Fla. Const.

Trailer Estates Fire Control District

Trailer Estates Fire Control District (TEFCD) was created by special act in 1963¹⁶ and serves the community of Trailer Estates, a deed restricted community.¹⁷ TEFCD is administered by a board of five commissioners.¹⁸

The charter of TEFCD does not provide ad valorem taxing authority separate from that provided in statute.¹⁹ TEFCD is authorized to levy special assessments against taxable real estate lying within its territorial boundaries.²⁰ TEFCD had an assessment rate of \$78.60 for fiscal year (FY) 2021-2022.²¹

On November 2, 2021, the electors in Trailer Estates voted to abolish and dissolve TEFCD and transfer the real and personal property of TEFCD to the Trailer Estates Park and Recreation District, effective September 30, 2022.²² Trailer Estates Park and Recreation District currently has no authority to provide fire protection and prevention services within the Trailer Estates community served by TEFCD.²³ To include the area of TEFCD within a different fire control district requires a vote of the qualified electors within the area approving the imposition of the new district's ad valorem taxes.²⁴

Effect of the Bill

The bill repeals ch. 2005-350, Laws of Florida, abolishing TEFCD and transferring all assets to the Trailer Estates Park and Recreation District.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

¹⁶ Ch. 63-1587, Laws of Fla. Ch. 2005-350, Laws of Fla., codified all special acts relating to Trailer Estates Fire Control District and provided a single, comprehensive charter for the district.

¹⁷ Trailer Estates Park & Recreation District, *About Us*, available at <https://www.trailerestates.com/about-us/> (last visited on January 27, 2022).

¹⁸ Ch. 2005-350, s. 3, Laws of Fla.

¹⁹ Ch. 2005-350, Laws of Fla. No taxing power is explicitly stated in the charter other than the intent of TEFCD to be an independent special taxing district and its power to levy special assessments against taxable real property lying within its territorial bounds. Ch. 2005-350, ss. 1 and 7(1), Laws of Fla. See also s. 191.009(1), F.S., authorizing fire control districts to levy ad valorem taxes not exceeding 3.75 mills.

²⁰ Ch. 2005-350, s. 7(1), Laws of Fla.

²¹ Trailer Estates Fire Control District, *Fiscal Year Budget October 1, 2021 to 9/30/2022*, available at <https://www.tefiredpt.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-2022Budget.pdf> (last visited on January 27, 2022).

²² Manatee County, *School Board/Municipal Elections, November 2, 2021 Sample Ballot*, available at https://www.votemanatee.com/Portals/Manatee/Documents/2021%20Generic%20Sample%20Ballot%20Final.pdf?ver=9Dm1LEBI8_7EkZjbcGIUSQ%3d%3d (last visited on January 27, 2022). See also Manatee County, Supervisor of Elections, *2021 School Board and Municipal Elections*. 410 voters voted "Yes" (93.82%) and 27 voters voted "No" (6.18%). Results available at <https://enr.electionsfl.org/MAN/3077/Summary/> (last visited on January 27, 2022).

²³ Ch. 2002-361, Laws of Fla.

²⁴ Art. VII, s. 9(b), Fla. Const.

1. Revenues:

The Economic Impact Statement (EIS) filed with the bill indicates it will have a revenue decrease of \$94,635 for FY 2022-23.

2. Expenditures:

The EIS filed with the bill indicates it will have a cost of \$168,000 for FY 2021-2022.

C. ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FILED? Yes No

D. NOTICE PUBLISHED? Yes No

IF YES, WHEN? November 23, 2021.

WHERE? *The Bradenton Herald*, a daily newspaper published in Manatee County, Florida.

E. REFERENDUM(S) REQUIRED? Yes No

IF YES, WHEN?