

Special Master on Claim Bills

CS/SB 70 — Relief of Donna Catalano by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

by Appropriations Committee and Senators Rouson and Ausley

This bill satisfies a settled claim supported by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS). The bill appropriates the sum of \$3,175,000 from the General Inspection Trust Fund to the DACS and directs the Chief Financial Officer to draw a warrant from those sums in favor of the claimant, Donna Catalano. Under the bill, the total amount paid for attorney fees may not exceed \$635,000, the total amount paid for lobbying fees may not exceed \$158,750, and the total amount paid for costs or similar expenses may not exceed \$29,059.94.

The bill adopts the facts stated in the preamble, which explain that the claim arises from a head-on collision that occurred on June 26, 2019. Donald Gerard Burthe, was an employee of the DACS, operating a department vehicle during his employment. Mr. Burthe failed to maintain his lane of travel and crossed the center line of U.S. Highway 90, colliding with Ms. Catalano's vehicle. As a result, Ms. Catalano underwent six surgeries during the next four days, to repair various injuries. Ms. Catalano went on to spend approximately three months in a rehabilitation center and later continued physical therapy at home. Ms. Catalano can no longer perform her job as a nurse and was discharged from her employment with Tallahassee Memorial Hospital. She continues to suffer with immobility, chronic pain, mental anguish, stress, and anxiety.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 34-2; House 116-0