



**THE FLORIDA SENATE**  
**SENATOR ANDY GARDINER**  
*President*

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Senators  
**FROM:** Andy Gardiner, President  
**SUBJECT:** Senate Chamber Renovations  
**DATE:** January 6, 2016

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This summer, we will begin the important work of renovating our Senate Chamber.

In my view, we are guests in this building and we have an important responsibility to adequately preserve and maintain areas of the Capitol complex designated for use by the Senate and often utilized by students and other civic groups when the Senate is not in Session.

In 2003, under the leadership of Senate President Jim King, the Senate entered into a contract with the Hicks Nation architectural firm in Tallahassee to begin the process of remodeling the Senate Chamber and Senate Office Building. Ultimately, the Chamber portion of the project was put on hold in favor of extensive changes to the Senate Office Building, which included the addition of committee rooms and many technology upgrades. These enhancements have proven critical to increasing public participation in the legislative process for citizens who come to Tallahassee and for others from our state and nation who view our work from afar.

As many Senators and visitors have mentioned to me over the last few years, our Senate Chamber has received only minimal updates since its original construction in the 1970s. Over the last four decades, the carpet has been replaced, the Senators' chairs along with the gallery seating were replaced, and Senators' desks were modified to accommodate changes in technology. Currently, our carpet is again in serious need of replacement and the HVAC units are outdated. Asbestos removal and compliance with current ADA requirements will also necessitate some remodeling.

Given the scope of the needed repairs and the fact an early Session provides an atypical amount of time for renovations, I recently reinitiated the contract with the Hicks Nation architectural firm. For the last few months, the architect has been working to update the original plans from 2003 to ensure they incorporate current building codes and the significant changes to technology over the last 13 years. Our new voting system is state of the art and will be preserved and

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incorporated into the renovation design. Through a competitive selection process, the Senate has also procured the services of All State Construction here in Tallahassee to serve as our construction manager.

I have appointed a Chamber Renovation Working Group to assist in making specific decisions regarding aesthetic and historical elements of the renovation. This working group will be led by our Senate President Pro Tempore, Senator Richter. Senators Benacquisto, Braynon, Montford, Lee, and Stargel have also agreed to serve the Senate as members of the working group.

Demolition of the structures being renovated is scheduled to begin following the adjournment sine die of the 2016 Regular Session, and construction is scheduled to conclude prior to the 2016 Organization Session this fall.

I look forward to discussing these plans with you further when we are together in Tallahassee during the upcoming Session.