



ENERGY NEWS

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Energy Report — 1998 State Legislative Session

by Robert Farmer, ©1998

Following is a recap of the hits and misses—mostly misses—in this year's Legislative Session. Although few energy-related bills were passed, what is interesting is the diversity of the issues that actually made it to the proposal stage. What's glaringly obvious, though, is that energy and environmental sustainability just don't rate in the state that stands to lose the most.

Department of Community Affairs Budget

\$6 million oil surcharge dollars were appropriated for energy program purposes. DCA was given broad discretion in fund allocation for such purposes as: transportation, communities, energy education, agriculture, alternative-fuel vehicles, long-term emissions mitigation development, solar initiatives, and weatherization program funding. *Note: Proviso was slated to be included under the energy funding section of the state budget to fund the development of a State Energy Plan but other than gaining a few supporters was defeated by the electric utility industry.*

State Comprehensive Plan

SB 2474 amended DCA's growth management bill to include creation of a Study Committee to recommend updates to the State Comprehensive Plan. The Plan includes a section on Energy Goals and

Policies which would also be subject to update.

Electricity Industry Restructuring

SB 1888 by Crist was not heard in Committee. Companion legislation was not filed in the House.

Global Climate Disruption

House Memorial (HR) 4069 barring US Senate ratification of the Kyoto Protocol absent binding emission limits on developing countries was approved by the Committee on Environmental Protection (!?) but did not make its way to the Floor.

Orimulsion

SB 98 and HB 3157 to ban the use of Orimulsion as a utility fuel were not given hearings in either house.

Economic Development

HB 3501 was approved to create a small business technology growth guarantee loan program.

Reliable and Affordable Energy

"Shell bills" were filed in both houses to "ensure the provision of adequate and reliable electric energy". The Senate bill (SB 1224) was not addressed by committee. The House bill (PCB UC-98-4) was modified to consist of a proposal relating to municipal utility customers only. The bill cleared the House Utilities Committee

but went no further.

Sales Tax Exemptions

HB 3249 broadened the sales tax exemption for electricity used in certain manufacturing operations to include steam used to operate related machinery and equipment.

The Energy Efficiency Rating Act

The Act was amended to streamline requirements of Realtors in notifying prospective buyers about the ratings.

Florida Public Service Commission

SB 426 to provide for election, rather than appointment, of PSC Commissioners was not heard in Committee.

Energy Performance Contracting Act

Proposed in SB 1500, was not heard in Committee.

Florida Clean Fuel Act

HB 4493 to promote alternative-fuel vehicles was not heard in Committee.

Farmer's Investment Outlook

Breathing gear, short-term. Oceanfront property at Disney World, long-term. •



Robert Farmer is an energy planning engineer and energy policy specialist. A comprehensive resource on technologies, issues, and policies, he offers clients strategies, briefings, and presentations on planning a sustainable energy future.

His technical expertise includes large scale to small scale power generation, combined heat and power (CHP), marine and surface transportation, and alternative fuel applications.

A Florida resident since 1984, Robert was a member of the Energy Advisory Committee of Governor Chiles' Commission for a Sustainable South Florida.

He is a Regional member and Market Development Chair of the Gold Coast Clean Cities Coalition (a U.S. Department of Energy program), and a member of the Southeast Air Coalition for Outreach (SEACO, an initiative of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection).

He is a member of the international Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) and since 1992 has served on the Board of the Southeast Florida Society of Energy Professionals, the local AEE chapter. He is a member of the Sound Science Initiative of the Union of Concerned Scientists, and a member of the United States Association for Energy Economics (USAEE).

He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Tallahassee-based law firm, Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation, Inc. (LEAF), and of Third Planet, a Fort Lauderdale-based public charity.

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