

SWFRPC Resolution #2015-02

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS MAINTAINING CURRENT STATUTORY ROLE, DUTIES AND BOUNDARIES; AND OPPOSING THE ADOPTION OF SENATE BILLS 484, 562 AND 832.

Summary

This resolution is designed to bring attention to three bills that have been introduced that directly threaten the future of Florida's Regional Planning Councils. Senate bills 484, 562 and 832, introduced by Senator Simpson, are all targeted at the Regional Planning Councils (RPC). The Regional Planning Councils serve many important purposes, including economic and cultural development, emergency planning and preparedness, and land development and other growth related services. The role of the Regional Planning Councils is essential because these functions cannot be equally served by local or state agencies; a regionally minded perspective is essential to adequate and fair planning and distribution of resources. For these reasons, the resolution concludes that the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council should oppose the adoption of Senate Bills 484, 562 and 832.

WHEREAS, Florida's Regional Planning Councils have played an integral role in economic and cultural growth, emergency preparedness, and conscientious land development in the State of Florida since their inception; and that the intergovernmental coordination required by the RPC system is of paramount importance to continued successes in our state.

WHEREAS, the issues associated with growth and development often transcend the boundaries of localized governmental bodies; the decisions made by one governmental body inherently impact surrounding areas; and the Legislature recognized the necessity of regional coordination and cooperation in order to combat these difficulties by enacting the Florida Regional Planning Council Act, thereby providing an essential platform for intergovernmental communication and coordination.

WHEREAS, the complex environmental systems that span multiple jurisdictions could be damaged by not having any entity that seeks to identify and protect these larger systems in order to insure the overall healthy functioning of Florida's valuable natural systems.

WHEREAS, currently existing RPC boundaries align with the Federal Economic Development Districts, and the alteration of existing RPC boundaries would harm Florida's economic development and require revisions to the existing EDA agreements as well as rewrites of the established Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies - both of which were created using extensive public input and public support.

WHEREAS, recently filed SB 484, if enacted, would drastically limit and alter the traditional roles and duties of RPC's, effectively removing Regional Planning Councils as we know them to be from state legislation.

WHEREAS, recently filed SB 562, if enacted, would remove the assessment of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) from the realm of Regional Planning Councils, leaving this important duty to a state-coordinated review process which would hinder consideration of local and regional impacts.

WHEREAS, recently filed SB 832, if enacted, could allow certain major, long-term development projects to move forward without a comprehensive assessment of local and regional factors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council opposes the adoption of any legislation that would act to restrict Florida's Regional Planning Councils - specifically Senate Bills 484, 562 and 832.

IMPLEMENTATION: This resolution, upon adoption by this Council, will be presented to the Representatives and Senators that represent the interests of the six-county area encompassing Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties, urging them to strongly consider our position on the proposed legislation; to support Regional Planning Councils; and to vote against any legislation that would be detrimental to the continued functioning of Florida's Regional Planning Councils.

DULY ADOPTED by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council on the 13th day of March, 2015.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

Robert "Bob" Mulhere, Chair

Margaret Wuerstle, Executive Director