



2026 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WEEK 2 REPORT

CITY OF SANIBEL

JANUARY 25, 2026

The 2026 Legislative Session continued through the second week of Session with limited activity on environmental bills.

Bills Filed

The following are bills that have been filed that may have a direct or indirect impact on Sanibel's natural resources:

HB 701/SB1120 – Water Management Districts. This bill adds criteria for all water management districts regarding transparency and ethics and adds an allowance for a water management district to levy as separate ad-valorem tax for the construction of projects (which the WMDs already can do) with a majority vote of the electors. Specific to the SFWMD, the bill adds very limited criteria for members of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force in how they are to project future funding for CERP projects and specifies annual reporting on the progress and budgets of on-going CERP projects. Much of the bill is focused on transparency with the overall funding obligation of CERP. The bill also limits the total amount of resiliency funds that can go to a water management district to 25% of any grant year, with the remainder going to local governments.

There are likely to be amendments to the bill as it moves forward.

SB 840/HB 1465 – Amend the portion of SB 180 adopted in the last legislative session that prohibits local government from adopting any more restrictive regulation if they were located within 100 miles of a landfalling storm. This bill changes the definition of impacted area to within 50 miles of the storm track, removes the language about adopting a more restrictive comprehensive plan amendment and focuses any limitation on process for rebuilding.

The Senate bill was unanimously passed out of the Community Affairs and Judiciary Committees.

SB 302/HB 1035 – Requires the Department of Environmental Protection to adopt a rule regarding green and gray infrastructure for shoreline hardening. This includes mangrove planting, dune restoration, beach renourishment, etc., and incentives to implement such projects and streamlined permitting.

The Senate bill unanimously passed through the Environment and Natural Resources Committee in December.

HB 1457/SB 848 – Establishes and directs DEP to initiate rule making for Water Quality Enhancement Areas, a form of water quality credit trading or mitigation banking for water quality projects.

This bill unanimously passed through the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and will next be heard by the Community Affairs Committee.

HB 239/SB 558 – Requires inspection standards for County and municipal stormwater systems. This bill is on the Environment and Natural Resources Committee in the Senate this year.

HB 479/SB 718 – This bill was originally filed as a broad preemption of any local government regulation of wetlands or water quality. It was replaced by a Committee Substitute and heard in the Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee. The Committee Substitute bill removes most of the preemption and only preempts local government from regulating the upland buffer areas around wetlands. There are three more committees that this bill will need to be reviewed by in the House. The Senate bill has not yet been scheduled for any committee hearings.

HB 669/SB 1042 – Among other provisions, this bill requires local governments to issue health advisories if water sampling shows a failure to meet Department of Health standards and issue a beach closure if deemed necessary. This bill has four committee stops, which will make it very difficult to move through the process to adoption.

HB 673/SB 938 – Requires that a water management district release a conservation easement that is less than 15 acres under specific criteria. This bill seems like it was crafted for a very specific property. It has yet to be scheduled for a committee hearing.

Activities During Week 2

Last week I worked on the following:

- Monitored discussion and progress on the budget.
- Monitored Senate Environment and Natural Resources and Community Affairs Committees and the House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee.
- Met with Representatives Connerly and Overdorf as well as legislative staff.



2026 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WEEK 3 REPORT

CITY OF SANIBEL

FEBRUARY 1, 2026

The 2026 Legislative Session continued through the third week of Session with activity on environmental bills as outlined below.

Bills Filed

The following are bills that have been filed that may have a direct or indirect impact on Sanibel's natural resources:

HB 701/SB1120 – Water Management Districts. This bill adds criteria for all water management districts regarding transparency and ethics and adds an allowance for a water management district to levy as separate ad-valorem tax for the construction of projects (which the WMDs already can do) with a majority vote of the electors. Specific to the SFWMD, the bill adds very limited criteria for members of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force in how they are to project future funding for CERP projects and specifies annual reporting on the progress and budgets of on-going CERP projects. Much of the bill is focused on transparency with the overall funding obligation of CERP. The bill also limits the total amount of resiliency funds that can go to a water management district to 25% of any grant year, with the remainder going to local governments.

There are likely to be amendments to the bill as it moves forward. This bill is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural Resources and General Government on February 4th.

SB 840/HB 1465 – Amend the portion of SB 180 adopted in the last legislative session that prohibits local government from adopting any more restrictive regulation if they were located within 100 miles of a landfalling storm. This bill changes the definition of impacted area to within 50 miles of the storm track, removes the language about adopting a more restrictive comprehensive plan amendment and focuses any limitation on process for rebuilding.

The Senate bill was unanimously passed out of the Community Affairs and Judiciary Committees.

SB 302/HB 1035 – Requires the Department of Environmental Protection to adopt a rule regarding green and gray infrastructure for shoreline hardening. This includes mangrove planting, dune restoration, beach renourishment, etc., and incentives to implement such projects and streamlined permitting.

The Senate bill unanimously passed through the Environment and Natural Resources Committee in December and is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural Resources and General Government on February 4th. The House bill passed out of the Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee.

HB 1457/SB 848 – Establishes and directs DEP to initiate rule making for Water Quality Enhancement Areas, a form of water quality credit trading or mitigation banking for water quality projects.

This bill unanimously passed through the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and will next be heard by the Community Affairs Committee.

HB 239/SB 558 – Requires inspection standards for County and municipal stormwater systems and requires that storm water systems in counties and municipalities comply with FDOT standards. This bill passed out of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee last week and will next be scheduled for the Community Affairs Committee.

HB 479/SB 718 – This bill was originally filed as a broad preemption of any local government regulation of wetlands or water quality. It was replaced by a Committee Substitute and heard in the Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee. The Committee Substitute bill removes most of the preemption and only preempts local government from regulating the upland buffer areas around wetlands. There are three more committees that this bill will need to be reviewed by in the House. The Senate bill has not yet been scheduled for any committee hearings.

HB 669/SB 1042 – Among other provisions, this bill requires local governments to issue health advisories if water sampling shows a failure to meet Department of Health standards and issue a beach closure if deemed necessary. This bill has four committee stops, which will make it very difficult to move through the process to adoption.

HB 673/SB 938 – Requires that a water management district release a conservation easement that is less than 15 acres under specific criteria. This bill seems like it was crafted for a very specific property. This bill was passed out of the House Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee.

SB 290/HB 433 – This is a wide-ranging bill for the Florida Department of Consumer Services. Among other topics that this bill deals with is an amendment to existing statute that provide legal recourse against people or organization that “disparage” perishable agricultural food as not safe for human consumption. The provision in this bill expands the definition to include disparagement of agricultural practices, which some fear may include legitimate concerns on water quality. As currently written, the provision in this bill would be limited and not of concern. The bill was Temporarily Postponed in the Senate Rules Committee and has not yet been rescheduled. We will continue to monitor this bill as it moves forward.

Activities During Week 3:

Last week I worked on the following:

- Monitored discussion and progress on the budget.
- Monitored the House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee Senate Environment and Natural Resources and Senate Rules Committees.