

2026 Legislative Session Outlook

December 17th, 2025

Becker

Your State Lobbying Team



Ellyn S. Bogdanoff

Shareholder
Becker



Cody Rogers

Government Relations
Specialist
Becker

2026 Legislative Session Information

The Florida State Constitution requires the Florida Legislature to meet in Tallahassee for regular session for 60 days every year:

- The regular session begins on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March for odd-numbered years, and on the second Tuesday after the first Monday in January for even-numbered years.
- “The seat of government shall be the City of Tallahassee, in Leon County, where the offices of the governor, lieutenant governor, cabinet members and the supreme court shall be maintained, and the sessions of the legislature shall be held...”
- January 13th, 2026 - Regular Session convenes
- March 13th, 2026 - Last day of Regular Session
- There are six interim committee weeks between now and the start of the 2025 Legislative Session

The Florida Legislature is constitutionally required to pass a balanced state budget, officially titled the General Appropriations Act, during the annual regular session.

- This is the only piece of legislation legislators are required to pass each year.

2026 Appropriation Projects

The Town is currently seeking funding for two appropriation projects this Session:

- Town of Lake Park – Traffic Safety Upgrade - \$800,000
 - Upgrading traffic safety in Lake Park by creating an Oval about at a well-traveled five-way intersection will reduce the number of vehicular crashes that occur in that area
 - 27 in the 10 years ending 1/1/25, 24 of which occurred in the last five of those years.
 - It will also create traffic-calming benefits by reducing travel speeds, increase mobility, and provide residents, local business owners, and visitors to Lake Park with an increased level of serving
- Town of Lake Park – Septic-to-Sewer Conversion - \$500,000
 - Partnership with PBC – Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative
 - Construction includes removal of existing septic systems and installation of lateral connections and other components to existing sewer system.
 - The project represents the final 42 parcels to complete a town-wide conversion of 4,374 total parcels

Recent State Appropriation Success

- **2017**

- \$600,000 – Lakeshore Drainage – Sen. Powell

- **2019**

- \$29,000 – Road Stripping Improvement Project - Sen. Powell & Rep. Jacquet

- **2022**

- \$700,000 – Lake Shore Drive Drainage Improvements - Sen. Powell & Rep. Caruso

- **2023**

- \$1,000,000 – Septic to Sewer Conversion Project – Sen. Powell & Rep. Edmonds

- **2024**

- \$1,000,000 - Palm Beach Shores - Lake Worth Inlet/Singer Island Channel Dredging Project – Sen. Harrell & Rep. Caruso

\$3.3 Million!

Becker
Becker & Poliakoff

Budget Outlook

- On September 12th, the Legislative Office of Economic and Demographic Research presented an updated Long-Range Financial Outlook to the Legislative Budget Commission.
 - The State of Florida's General Revenue Fund collections were slightly over the March 2025 estimates for Fiscal Year 2024-25; however, the August 2025 estimates generally retain the previous forecast due to expected short-term weakness in key economic variables.
 - Although actions taken by the Legislature in the 2025 Session improved the state's financial position, expenditure projections are expected to outpace available General Revenue beginning in Year 2 of the Outlook.
 - A minimum reserve equivalent to 3.9 percent of the revenue estimate is maintained in the General Revenue Fund for each year of the Outlook.
 - The Outlook does not account for any new or expanded programs.

Budget Outlook

(cont.)

- The forecasts assume the legislature will continue spending on the priorities of the recent years like:
 - Popular tax cuts and holidays
 - Investment in affordable housing
 - Increases for health care workers and providers
 - Florida's universal school voucher program
 - Medicaid growth and a shortfall in the employee health insurance program.
- The outlook also demonstrates the shift in Federal funding to State funding.
- The FY 24/25 Budget was \$117.4 billion post Vetoes.

Bill Watch

- HB 217/SB 218 – Land Use Regulations – by Rep. Abbott & Sen. Gaetz

- Defines the term “impacted local government” for counties under specified federal disaster declarations and revises land use restrictions and enforcement processes in those disaster-impacted areas.
- Defines “impacted local government” to include counties designated under certain federal disaster declarations for Hurricanes Debby, Helene, or Milton, as well as any municipality within those counties.
- Substitutes the term “impacted local government” for “county or municipality” in existing provisions related to post-hurricane land use regulations.
- Prohibits newly defined impacted local governments from imposing moratoria or more restrictive land use regulations on hurricane-damaged property until October 1, 2027, invalidating any such proposals retroactively.
- Ensures residents or business owners in affected areas can bring civil actions against impacted local governments for noncompliance, with provisions governing attorney fees and damages.
- Applies these changes retroactively to August 1, 2024. ; Effective Date: July 1, 2026
- Status: Awaiting first committee hearing in both chambers

Bill Watch

- HB 405/SB 526 – Commercial Construction Projects– by Rep. Griffitts Jr. & Sen. Grall
 - Expand contractor protections for delays in public construction contracts and mandate uniform commercial building permit application processes statewide.
 - Void clauses in public construction contracts that limit contractor recovery of costs or time extensions for delays caused by the awarding body, including concurrent delays
 - Create a uniform commercial building permit application to be used statewide and prohibit local modifications, while allowing standardized trade-specific and supplemental forms
 - Require local enforcement agencies to allow simultaneous permitting reviews and permit additional documentation only as necessary to ensure code compliance
 - Define commercial construction projects and require local enforcement agencies to reduce or forfeit permit fees for such projects when private providers perform plan review or inspection services
 - Effective Date: July 1, 2026
 - Status: Second committee stop in the House; referenced in the Senate

Bill Watch

- **SB 48 / HB 313 – Housing** by Senator Gaetz & Representative Nix
 - Requires local governments to adopt accessory dwelling unit ordinances, allows landlords to accept reusable tenant screening reports, and expands affordable housing incentives and studies.
- **HB 67 - Reduction of Annual Assessment Increases for Homestead Property** by Rep. Holcomb
 - Reduce the maximum annual increase in the assessed value of homestead property from 3% to 1.5%.
- **HB 71 - Distribution of Funds to Homestead Property Owners** by Rep. Holcomb
 - Create a Homestead Property Tax Relief Program to provide annual \$1,000 payments to eligible homesteaders for a limited duration.
- **HB 123 - Special Districts** by Rep. Overdorf
 - Abolishes certain soil and water conservation districts, revises special district laws, and updates liability, annexation, purchasing, and performance review provisions.
- **SB 208 / HB 399 - Land Use and Development Regulations** by Senator McClain & Rep. Borrero
 - Revises land use rules to streamline approvals for infill residential developments and limit local design and fee restrictions.
- **SB 248 / HB 247 - Public Records/Municipal Clerks and their Staff** by Senator Rodriguez & Rep. Campbell
 - Protects personal information of municipal clerks and their staff by expanding public records exemptions.
- **SB 270, SB 274, SB 276 – Senator Bernard’s Property Tax Reform Bills**
 - Creates a total homestead property tax exemption for persons age sixty-five or older who meet certain residency and income requirements, excluding school district levies.
 - Proposes preventing the assessed value of homestead property from increasing after 20 years and grants an additional homestead tax exemption for those residing in their homestead for 30 years or more.
 - Expand homestead property tax benefits for Florida homeowners who have maintained ownership and residency for at least 20 or 30 years.

Bill Watch

- SB 302 - Nature-based Solutions for Improving Coastal Resilience by Senator Garcia
 - Create a framework requiring the adoption and study of nature-based solutions for improving coastal resilience.
- SB 322 – Construction by Senator McClain
 - Expands landlords' maintenance obligations to include certain cooling requirements, revises contractor definitions, and updates continuing education requirements for certificate holders and registrants.
- HB 323 - Parking on Public Property by Rep. Steele
 - Require local governments to refund or carry over unused parking fees on public property, restrict towing and citations for parked vehicles, and prohibit private entities from charging parking fees on such property.
- SB 426 / HB 347 - Adoption and Display of Flags by Governmental Entities by Senator Yarborough & Rep. Borrero
 - Prohibit governmental entities from displaying certain flags and void conflicting local regulations while imposing penalties for violations.
- SB 548 - Growth Management by Senator McClain
 - Define "plan-based methodology," revise concurrency requirements, and modify impact fee regulations and procedures to limit certain local government rate increases and expand accountability measures.

Property Tax

- CATEGORICAL ELIMINATIONS
 - **HJR 201 by Rep. Steele** eliminates non-school homestead property taxes.
 - **HJR 203 by Rep. Miller** phases out non-school homestead property taxes over a ten-year period. Each year homeowners would receive an additional \$100,000 exemption. After ten years, all non-school homestead property taxes would be eliminated.
 - **HJR 205 by Rep. Porras** exempts Florida residents over the age of 65 from paying non-school homestead property taxes
- ADDITIONAL EXEMPTIONS
 - **HJR 207 by Rep. Abbott** creates a new homestead exemption for non-school property taxes equal to 25% of the assessed value of the house. In addition to providing relief to current homeowners, it would also benefit first-time homebuyers.
 - **HJR 209 by Rep. Busatta** creates a new property insurance relief homestead tax exemption. Homestead property owners who have property insurance will be entitled to an additional \$100,000 exemption on non-school property taxes.
- REFORMS
 - **HJR 211 by Rep. Overdorf** eliminates the cap on portability, allowing a homeowner to transfer their entire accumulated Save Our Homes benefit to their new home, even if that home has a lesser value.
 - **HJR 213 by Rep. Griffitts** limits the growth in assessed value of non-school homestead property taxes to 3% over three years for homestead property (currently it is 3% per year) and 15% over three years for non-homestead property (currently it is 10% per year).
 - **HB 215 by Rep. Albert** makes various statutory changes including requiring a 2/3 vote for any increase in the millage rate and allowing newly married couples to combine their accumulated Save Our Homes benefits. The outlook also demonstrates the shift in Federal funding to State funding

MSTU Local Bill

- **Overview of the Bill**
 - The bill addresses the provision and funding of fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS) when property in unincorporated Palm Beach County is annexed into a municipality after January 1, 2026.
- **Key Policy Changes**
 - **Service Provision**
 - The County's Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) remains the fire, rescue, and EMS provider for properties annexed after January 1, 2026.
 - This applies regardless of general law, special acts, municipal charters, or local ordinances.
 - A municipality may assume services **only through a written interlocal agreement** approved by both the County Commission and the annexing municipality.
 - **Taxing and Boundaries**
 - Upon annexation:
 - MSTU boundaries **contract to exclude** the annexed property.
 - The County **may not levy MSTU ad valorem taxes** on the annexed property.
- **Financial Responsibility**
 - The annexing municipality must **annually reimburse the County** an amount equal to the **ad valorem taxes and assessments** that would have been collected if the property remained in the MSTU.

THANK YOU!