



2015 Governmental Affairs Agenda

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Local Agenda Items

City: St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores.

Agenda Item: Pedestrian Safety

Agenda Item Description: Pedestrian safety is a hot topic across the county. Florida is consistently recognized for the highest number of pedestrian fatalities per capita. Promotion and education of the crosswalk system along SR699 (Gulf Boulevard) is a major concern to businesses and leaders.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports the promotion and education of crosswalks throughout Gulf Boulevard. WalkWise initiated a campaign to educate the local community. The TBBCoC completed phase one of an educational campaign directed toward the people actually using the crosswalks along Gulf Boulevard, the visitors. Phase one introduced educational pieces in hotels along the beaches to direct transient visitors on how to use the new crosswalk systems as a pedestrian. Phase two introduced educational pieces into the rental cars to direct transient visitors on how to use the crosswalks as a driver. We will continue to support pedestrian safety in future endeavors.

Useful Resources:

- More Information: <http://walkwisetampabay.com/>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- Word of mouth is the best way to educate.
 - Distribute educational material available at the TBBCoC.
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City: St. Pete Beach

Agenda Item: Upham Beach Infrastructure

Agenda Item Description: Last year, the TBBCoC successfully advocated for funding towards beach renourishment as a result of erosion due to storms and hurricanes. Now that our beaches are renourished, infrastructure projects are needed to keep our precious white, powdery sand in place. Temporary T-groins, designed to slow erosion, were installed at Upham Beach. However, lack of funding prohibits permanent structures from being installed.

Current Status: The TBBCoC is advocating for funding towards permanent T-groin structures at Upham Beach. T-groins are essential for protecting our award-winning beaches and maintaining a strong and prosperous local economy. Our beaches draw tourists from all over the world and the money they spend here keeps our taxes low. Our beaches are the lifeblood of our economy and we must do everything in our power to restore and protect them.

Useful Resources:

- Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

Action:

- Urge Florida State elected officials to support funding permanent T-groin structures at Upham Beach.
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City: St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores.

Agenda Item: Water Quality

Agenda Item Description: The fecal count in the intercostal waterways has reached dangerously high levels. There can be many contributing factors that account for such high levels. One main factor is when vessels illegally discharge untreated sewage. Another contributing factor could be a broken sewer line discharging untreated sewer into the bay. Both of these factors are being investigated.

Current Status: The TBBCoC advocates for the protection of our waterways and quality of life. The discharge of untreated sewage from vessels within navigable waters is prohibited. However, no one is enforcing this law. Last year more authority was given to deputies allowing them to board vessels and check for proper holding tanks. However, if vessels are not in compliance deputies have no recourse of action. Currently, the TBBCoC is advocating for legislation that returns authority back to local governments and ultimately returning power to deputies.

Useful Resources:

- Madeira Beach Commissioner, Elaine Poe: 727-391-5591
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/government_affairs.aspx

Action:

- Contact County Commissioner John Morroni: (727) 464-3568, JMorrone@pinellascounty.org
 - Contact Representative Kathleen Peters: (850) 717-5069, Kathleen.Peters@myfloridahouse.gov
 - Contact Senator Jeff Brandes: (850) 487-5022, Brandes.jeff.web@flsenate.gov
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County Agenda

Agenda Item: Gulf Boulevard Beautification

*This is a local issue that is decided by the county

Agenda Item Description: Gulf Boulevard has long been an area attraction for tourists accessing the County's beaches. Gulf Boulevard Improvements Project developed and adopted by Board of County Commissioners in 2001. Program included undergrounding of utilities, streetscape enhancements, and pedestrian safety improvements. Funding runs until 2020 and a vote to extend the penny will take place in 2017. If cities do not use the funds allocated to them by December of 2019, funds remain in city budgets.

Current Status: The TBBCoC is advocating for undergrounding of utilities, streetscape enhancements, and pedestrian safety improvements along Gulf Boulevard which will allow for the following.

- Improve businesses, visitors, and residents quality of life.
- Unification of the eleven beach communities through common amenities and streetscape improvements.
- Elimination of visual blight caused by overhead utilities.
- Development of an attractive roadway experience to spur tourism and economic development.

Useful Resources:

- More Information: http://www.pinellascounty.org/bcc-agenda/2012_07_10/supplement-16.pdf
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- The TBBCoC will work closely with county and local officials to assure the completion of this project.
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Agenda Item: Restore Act

Agenda Item Description: Pinellas County will be receiving \$1.5 to \$2 million a year from BP for projects that will restore and preserve our coastlines and Gulf waters. The TBBCoC advocated for action during the 2010 Deep Water Horizon oil spill and these funds are a direct result of our hard work.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports the restoration and preservation of our coastline and Gulf of Mexico ultimately creating a better quality of life for all. The TBBCoC advocates vigorously to restore the environment and economy of the Gulf Coasts above and beyond the environmental and economic impacts associated with the oil spill. The TBBCoC supports the Pinellas County Restore Act and encourages projects to be submitted.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- Visit <http://www.pinellascounty.org/restore/> to submit project ideas
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Agenda Item: Tourist Development Tax (Bed Tax) Enforcement

Agenda Item Description: Enforcing residents that rent their properties to tourists pay the Tourist Development Tax. This is essential to promote our destination, attract visitors, and support the tourism Industry. Enforcing residential rental properties to pay the Tourist Development Tax will create fair and equitable funding opportunities for all rental properties and legitimate businesses.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports the enforcement of the Tourist Development Tax collection. Residential rental properties are required to pay their fair share of the Tourist Development Tax. However, some properties are being rented illegally through websites like Airbnb and are not paying the Tourism Development Tax. In some cases, municipalities don't allow residential properties to be rented. The tax of 5 cents per dollar is supposed to be levied not just on motel or hotel stays, but on all "transient accommodations" of six months or less. That includes vacation or seasonal stays at townhouses, condominiums, timeshares, single-family homes, mobile homes, beach cottages and rooming houses.

Useful Resources:

- More Information: <http://www.pinellascvb.com/cms/index.php?id=6>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- TBBCoC is working with County and State officials to find a solution.
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Agenda Item: Tourist Development Tax (Bed Tax) Preservation

Agenda Item Description: Preserving the Bed Tax for its intended purpose is essential to promote our destination, attract visitors, and support the tourism Industry. Preserving the Bed Tax for its intended purpose will create fair and equitable funding opportunities for all events.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports preserving the Bed Tax for its intended purpose. However, recent amendments to the bill present the precedence for other entities to make changes as well. This could result in funds being appropriated for things that don't meet the sufficient requirements which will take away from the intended purpose, attracting visitors to our area. The Bed Tax is a five percent tourist tax collected on accommodations rented for less than six months. The tax is used to strengthen the local economy and increase employment through the ongoing promotion and development of tourism, Pinellas County's major industry.

Useful Resource:

- More Information: <http://www.pinellascvb.com/cms/index.php?id=6>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- TBBCoC is attending all TDC Meeting to stay informed
 - TBBCoC is speaking with PCC to guarantee they fully understand the preservation of these funds
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Agenda Item: Transit

Agenda Item Description: As ridership on Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority buses along the beaches have been reaching record highs, the county's transportation budget will be facing up to 30% reduction in funding. An improved network of buses will ensure that the growing demand of the PSTA services are met. Due to the cut in funding, it is essential that Pinellas County transit system gains revenue to ensure it remains an intricate part of our beach community.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports working with the community and creating a forum for discussion to collectively plan for an improved network of buses to keep up with the growing ridership along our award winning beaches. PSTA has been and will continue to seek feedback from the beach communities and other areas on what the focus should include in PSTA's proposed Pinellas Community Bus Plan.

Useful Resources:

- More Information: <http://www.psta.net>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- Be a part of the discussion.
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State Agenda

Agenda Item: **Corporate Lease Tax**

Agenda Item Description: Regardless of the size or complexity of a commercial lease transaction, the state of Florida requires sales tax to be paid on certain lease-related charges. Florida is the only state that imposes a specific sales tax on commercial real estate leases. This excessive tax is hampering economic recovery for employers and especially small businesses; subjecting Florida businesses to disproportionate regulatory burdens; creating instances of double taxation; and sacrificing our competitiveness in securing more corporate headquarters and other employers into the state—ultimately costing Florida jobs.

Current Status: TBBCoC opposes the corporate lease tax in order to create a fair and level playing field for all businesses. Imposing more taxes on our industry discourages job creation in a time when job creation is essential. Florida needs to pass legislation that will get rid of unfair double taxation, specifically tenants paying sales taxes on property taxes paid as part of their leases. In addition, the removal of this tax will help put Florida businesses on a level playing field with other retailers.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

Action:

- Urge Florida State elected officials to oppose the Corporate Lease Tax.
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Agenda Item: **E-fairness**

Agenda Item Description: Online retailers are not required to pay sales tax which creates an unfair price advantage over brick-and-mortar businesses. As their customers naturally gravitate to perceived lower prices online, small local businesses are forced to cut their workforces, prices, or wages to keep their businesses open. This cycle is dragging down our small business economy. By closing this massive loophole, Florida will be more competitive and save small business jobs.

Current Status: TBBCoC supports the E-fairness bill and its efforts to create a fair and level playing field for small businesses whether they sell online or on Main Street. The E-fairness Bill empowers Florida to collect taxes that are already on the books. No new tax is included in this bill.

Useful Resources:

- More Information: <http://bit.ly/11uUTbe>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

Action:

- Urge Florida State elected officials to support E-Fairness.
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Agenda Item: Film Florida

Agenda Item Description: Pinellas County has benefited from major feature films (Dolphin Tale, Dolphin Tale 2, Spring Breakers, Magic Mike) and several independent films, spending more than \$5 million in the last three years. During the 2014 legislative session, Florida's Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive program was not allocated additional tax credits and there are presently no tax credits available in the program through 2015/2016.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports Film Florida's mission ensuring the success of Florida's Film Industry. In order to ensure the continued success of Florida's Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive program the film, TV, commercial & media production industry asks for your support of the following priorities:

- Additional funding for the remaining fiscal years of the program
- Additional long-term commitment to the program in the form of additional years or no sunset
- Adequate funding for the Office of Film & Entertainment
- Contract with Film Florida to create a public-private partnership that will provide consistent leadership for Florida's entertainment production industries by 1.) marketing the state's industry resources. 2.) aligning and building the state's regional industry clusters and; 3.) ensuring that steps are being taken to protect Florida's investment in the entertainment production industries.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

Action:

- Urge Florida State elected officials to support Film Florida
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Agenda Item: Insurance Reform

Agenda Item Description: Creating a competitive and stable insurance market will lower costs in Florida's current insurance market. We must continue initiatives like reducing the size and exposure of Citizens Insurance, reforming Florida's flood insurance program, reforming Florida's Catastrophe Fund, spreading risks, reducing fraudulent claims and allowing for creative solutions for the issues homeowners and businesses face.

Current Status: The TBBCoC advocates for insurance reform allowing alternatives for residents and business owners on the verge of foreclosure. Fixing Florida's broken insurance system to reduce taxpayer risk in the event of a catastrophic storm is a step in the right direction. This effort creates a roadmap to help return insurance corporations back to the insurer of last resort by reducing the number of policies in government insurance market and placing them in the private insurance market instead. For a more competitive business climate, the fight for free enterprise continues. Instead of short-term quick fixes, we are focused on long-term solutions to grow the private-sector and help small businesses and families.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

Action:

- Urge Florida State elected officials to support insurance reform.
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Agenda Item: Regulation Reform

Agenda Item Description: Excessive regulations increase costs for businesses. Regulatory burdens will make Florida less competitive and scare away companies looking to relocate to Florida. If regulations are warranted, they should be uniform across the state and should be as minimally invasive and as cost effective as possible. An Overwhelming amount of regulations is holding back businesses and economic development. Regulations have become unbalance and unmanageable. 4,000 new regulations are created every year. The government needs to be more transparent and have the public involved.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports regulation reform in order to create a competitive business climate which is paramount to our efforts to return Florida to the number one job creator in the nation. Job creators and potential employees should determine conditions of employment. Local and county referendums and mandates will only impose further burdens on businesses and job creation.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

Action:

- Urge Florida State elected officials to support Regulation Reform.
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Agenda Item: Reliable and Effective Energy Solutions

Agenda Item Description: Considering Florida's current economic conditions, as well as future economic growth, Florida needs to achieve a stable, reliable and diverse supply of energy. Energy policy requires a stable, predictable regulatory and business climate while promoting energy resources that further fuel source diversification through the deployment of existing and alternative energy sources. Florida must renew its commitment to energy resources and technologies which result in the creation of new jobs within the state. Florida also needs to remain committed to consumer education on energy while continuing to modernize and expand existing energy infrastructure to ensure it is ready for the challenges of the 21st century.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports an energy policy that puts the long-term over the short-term and rests on reliable, cost effective energy sources to grow the economy. This type of policy will increase energy independence and promote the use of domestic energy sources. It would also include advanced technologies and pave the way for sustainable economic growth. Recognizing Florida's current economic conditions, as well as future economic growth, we are working to make sure that Florida's needs are met with an energy policy that responds to new technology and changes in the market while bringing in new capital for investment and increasing energy security.

Useful Resources:

- Learn More: <http://www.flchamber.com/?s=alternative+energy&x=33&y=24>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

Action:

- Urge Florida House of Representatives support Reliable and Effective Energy Solutions.
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Agenda Item: Sales Tax Revenue

Agenda Item Description: Every year our beaches receive record numbers of visitors on top of the many part-time residents who pay sales tax on everything they purchase. However, beach cities are only reimbursed for the number of full-time residents.

Current Status: The TBBCoC is advocating for beach cities to receive their fair share of the sales tax reimbursement. TBBCoC supports using studies to recalculate sales tax reimbursement formula to include visitors and part-time residents, as opposed to just full-time residents.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- Contact County Commissioner John Morroni: (727) 464-3568, JMorrone@pinellascounty.org
 - Contact Representative Kathleen Peters: (850) 717-5069, Kathleen.Peters@myfloridahouse.gov
 - Contact Senator Jeff Brandes: (850) 487-5022, Brandes.jeff.web@flsenate.gov
-

Agenda Item: Transportation Infrastructure

Agenda Item Description: Navigating throughout Pinellas County is no easy task. Traveling to the beaches from our airports or attractions can be burdensome and may discourage tourists from returning to Pinellas County. Right now you can take I-275 north and south, from St. Pete Beach to north St. Petersburg/Clearwater. However, heading north on I-275 from St. Pete beach takes you farther and farther away from the beaches. Once in North St. Petersburg/Clearwater, there is no way to get to the beach without sitting in traffic for long periods of time. We need east and west expressways connecting I-275 to the beaches that can accommodate thousands of tourists as well as the locals who travel on our roads every day.

Current Status: The TBBCoC supports east/west expressways connecting I-275 in western Pinellas County to the beaches in Eastern Pinellas County. East/west expressways will allow residents and visitors to move freely about the county to and from airports, beaches and local attractions. Pinellas County is competing with all counties in Florida to be the best and brightest. We want to attract the most jobs and tourists. If we do nothing our infrastructure will suffer and degrade over time. Residents, tourists and employers will move away to a better county. We need to invest in our infrastructure to improve our overall quality of life. If we don't move forward, we will fall behind. Let's move forward.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

Action:

- Contact Florida Senator Jeff Brandes, Chair of Transportation Committee, and urge him to take action.
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Federal Agenda

Agenda Item: **Fisheries**

Agenda Item Description: Recreational and commercial fishing have been critical to our quality of life and our economy here in Pinellas for generations. We must do more to responsibly reduce the number of fishery closures and to invest in responsible stock enhancement. We need to improve how we manage fishery closures that hurt our economy and our way of life.

Current Status: The TBBCoC advocates for sound management and conservation of marine resources and maximize the opportunity to fish and are pursuing the four following principals:

- Move decision making process on fishery closures from the National Marine Fisheries Service in Washington to the regional council level closest to the local stakeholders in our state and community – in our case, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council;
- Remove the Department of Commerce’s ability to veto gubernatorial appointments to the regional councils
- Redirect current funding to further invest in enhanced fish habitats
- Redirect current funding to improve research related to survivability of juvenile fish stocks

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track Legislation: <https://www.govtrack.us/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

Action: Urge your Congressional delegates to support the four principals toward responsibly managing our fisheries.

Agenda Item: **Insurance Reform**

Agenda Item Description: We all depend on reasonably priced insurance to live safe and healthy lives. Yet because of oversight on insurance industry activities, insurers can impose rate hikes that are so astronomical that they threaten the ability of businesses and professionals, homeowners or motorists to function. We need to support effective reforms of flood insurance, property insurance, and others insurance reforms. The insurance industry has created liability insurance crises, making insurance unaffordable or, in some cases, unavailable at any price.

Current Status: The TBBCoC advocates for insurance reform to control skyrocketing insurance rates, reduced insurance coverage, arbitrary policy cancellations, mismanagement and other insurance industry abuses. This will allow for more affordable and reliable flood insurance, property insurance and other insurance options to help businesses cope with increased risks.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Track Legislation: <https://www.govtrack.us/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

Action: Urge your Congressional delegates to support insurance reform.
