



COMMUNITY ADVOCACY 2022

**REPRESENTING THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES
ALONG THE TAMPA BAY BEACHES**

**6990 GULF BOULEVARD,
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Local Agenda Items

Agenda Item: Beach Renourishment *Local issue combined with state and federal government
Description: Beach renourishment is essential for protecting our award-winning beaches and maintaining a strong and prosperous local economy. The beaches are essential in our efforts to continue breaking tourism records year over year. (Advocate for easements; Army Corp Engineers)

Agenda Item: Business Development

Description: Streamline the process to open a business allowing business owners to invest in our community and reduce burdensome regulations that prevent business owners from upgrading or improving their property. (Signage; Parking)

Agenda Item: Economic Development

Description: Redevelopment is essential for St. Pete Beach, Treasure Island and Madeira Beach to be competitive in the marketplace. If regulations are not updated to allow for adequate height and density, hotels will be replaced with condominiums and the area will lose the tourists that keep our taxes low. (Redevelopment)

Agenda Item: Pedestrian Safety

Description: Promotion and education of pedestrian safety including crosswalk & bicycle safety throughout Gulf Boulevard is paramount to the local community. The TBBCOC continues to work with Walk/Bike Tampa Bay on an education campaign. (Crosswalks; Education; Protection of current crosswalks)

Agenda Item: Sand Intrusion

Description: Due to sand migration in John's Pass, Madeira Beach has seen massive amounts of sand build-up. Solutions to mitigation and intrusions are needed. Once the sand intrusion is mitigated, dredging will need to take place to remove excess sand. (Cohesive partnerships; city, county, federal - army corps)

County Agenda

Agenda Item: Tourist Development Tax: Preservation

Description: Preserving the Tourist Development Tax for its intended purpose is essential to promote our destination, attract visitors, keep taxes low, enhance quality of life and support the tourism Industry; Pinellas County's #1 industry. (Maintain 60/40; Do not allow expansion)

Agenda Item: Transportation

Description: Providing additional transportation options such as waterborne transportation as well as enhancing road infrastructure, etc. are important to ease congestion and make it easier to navigate the county. (Microtransit; Cohesive)

Agenda Item: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater

Agenda Item Description: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) is world renowned for their marketing efforts. There is a clear focus on Clearwater Beach and Downtown St. Pete, however, more focus needs to be put on our individual beach communities. (Continue micro focus)

Agenda Item: Water Quality

Agenda Item Description: The cleaner our waterways are, the more of an economic impact they generate. Millions of visitors, businesses and residents rely on clean waterways to sustain the quality of life that drew them here. (Agencies to invest and full county support)

Agenda Item: Workforce Development/Hospitality

Description: An enhanced pool of qualified workers is essential to remain competitive in a changing economy. Pinellas needs to advance economic well-being by developing and maintaining a quality workforce. (Job placement services; Careersource which includes state)

State Agenda

Agenda Item: Visit Florida | Hooper SB434/Chaney HB489

Visit Florida: Support of lifting the sunset of this organization

Visit Florida: Support to continue their funding no less than their current funding amounts.

Description: As the Sunshine State's No. 1 industry, tourism was responsible for welcoming 126+ million visitors in 2018 and employing more than 1.5 million Floridians. According to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, for every \$1 the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA – the official tourism marketing corporation for the state of Florida – \$2.15 in tax revenue is generated. VISIT FLORIDA promotes tourism to Florida through sales, advertising, promotions, public relations and visitor services programs. Each decision the agency has made has been based on financial research that led to record tourism and, more importantly, record spending by visitors. As a public/private partnership, VISIT FLORIDA serves more than 11,000 tourism industry businesses.

TBBCoC advocates for a fully funded reauthorization of VISIT FLORIDA. Adequate funding and resources for the tourism industry essential to stay competitive. Florida is a worldwide top travel destination with every 85 visitors creating 1 job and the TBBCoC advocates supporting and growing the industry, as well as removing the Agency's sunset.

Agenda Item: Alcohol License Abatement Proposal

Description: All businesses suffered due to COVID-19. However, some businesses suffered more than others. For example, bars and breweries were ordered to close for almost six months, through no fault of their own. Many of these businesses will not be able to recover unless they receive much needed assistance. Although renewal fees may seem nominal, in a small business every penny counts. When we are talking about small family run businesses, \$200-\$1,800 could make the difference for rent or utilities.

TBBCoC advocates for a lump sum waiver of the annual renewal or offsetting annual renewals by 1/4 over four years.

Agenda Item: Short Term Rentals | Burgess SB512/ Fischer HB325

Description: All short-term rentals must be regulated the same as any property management company. Currently, property management companies and vacation rental platforms (i.e. Airbnb, homeaway, etc.) are on uneven playing fields. Both rent properties, however, only property management companies are regulated. This incentivizes people to bypass legitimate business practices and skirt the system.

TBBCoC advocates for a fair and balanced playing field for all vacation rentals. Vacation rentals, either through property management companies or on website platforms, should be collecting and remitting taxes as well as regulated to ensure the health and safety of guests.

Agenda Item: Insurance Reform

Description: During the 2020-2021 Session, the legislature passed SB 76. This piece of legislation made a variety of changes to the insurance statutes, including raising the cap for Citizens Property from 10% to 15% by 2026, prohibits companies and contractors from soliciting individuals to file roof claims (to help fight fraud), and limits claims from 3 years to 2 years (this will also decrease fraudulent claims). Although this is a watered-down version of what many hoped would pass, there will be much focus on Citizens Property Insurance in the upcoming session. Citizens are not on a sustainable path as they are seeing exponential growth right now due to many private carriers pulling out of certain markets in the state or out of Florida all together. These private companies have a difficult time competing with Citizens as they have a built-in rate cap; this is another reason many private companies are closing shop.

TBBCoC advocates for legislation that will combat fraud and increase consumer choice in Florida's property insurance market. Assignment of benefits (AOB) fraud, roofing solicitations, and abusive claims practices have continued to cause significant losses for insurers, and in turn, have increased property owner's rates, forced private insurance companies to close their doors, and have pushed more property owners to Citizens.

Agenda Item: Incentivizing Film & Entertainment

Description: In order to promote tourism, increase the impact of the entertainment industry, and encourage more family-friendly productions to be made in Florida, SB 946 creates the Targeted High Wage Production Program within the Department of Economic Opportunity. The DEO recognizes the film and entertainment industry as a high-earning industry, being that its average salary is 60 percent higher than the state average. Incentivizing the entertainment industry in Florida through the tax credit program created under the bill will bolster economic activity and foster an environment that encourages more film, television, and digital media production projects to take place in Florida. As such, the bill aims to create more high-paying jobs and reasons for tourists to visit Florida. Credits will be awarded only to projects that have already made their expenditures within the state, and that have provided substantial economic contributions and returns to the area in which the project is located. Extensive verification and criteria ensure that state investments are only given to worthwhile projects.

TBCCoC advocates for entertainment incentives that prioritize high-earning employment of local persons and businesses, as well as projects that will be most beneficial to local economies.*

Agenda Item: Grease Waste Removal and Disposal | Chaney HB 1177

Description: Statutory requirements for disposal of grease and inspection of grease disposal systems. The bill requires that grease disposals take place only at designated locations, and prohibits disposal at non-designated sites. It also requires the maintenance of a service manifest document to be signed by the hauler and originator to document disposal events, and requires the DEP to inspect these manifests periodically. If HB 1177 and its Senate companion SB 1110 are approved, the statute will become effective July 1, 2022.

**TBCCoC is following other potential business impact legislation and will bring forth when such legislation starts any movement.*

Federal Agenda

Agenda Item: Flood Insurance

Description: Flood insurance continues to be a growing issue for Floridians with mounting rate increases, making it unaffordable and risky for property owners to sustain ownership in these zones. Representing coastal communities it is even more important today we continue to fight for better options as it relates to Flood Insurance on the federal level. With advocacy suggestions such as: Lowering the cap per year; providing discounts for flood mitigation efforts like elevated structures; allow for buyers to assume current rate upon purchase; provide property owners more options should they go from NFIP to private for vice versa.

Agenda Item: Beach Renourishment: Army Corps of Engineers

Description: Beach renourishment is essential for protecting our award-winning beaches and maintaining a strong and prosperous local economy. The beaches are essential in our efforts to continue breaking tourism records year over year.

Advocacy 101

Get Involved:

In order to truly serve the people they were elected to represent, elected officials need to hear from their constituents about important issues affecting their lives. Personally contacting your elected representatives is one of the most effective ways to get involved in the political process.

Make Contact:

Visit their office

Send an email

Make a phone call

Write a letter to the editor

Use social media – Twitter, Facebook, etc.

Key Points:

Make an appointment in advance

Be polite, be brief and be concise

Stick to the issue at hand

Leave information behind

Thank them for their time

Follow-up after the meeting