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## MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Leon County Board of County Commissioners  
**From:** Patton Boggs LLP  
**Date:** June 26, 2008  
**Subject:** Monthly Report for June

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The following will provide you with an overview of our activities during the month of June, 2008 on behalf of Leon County and other developments that impact the County.

### **FY 2009 Appropriations Update**

Congress is scheduled to recess for one week on Friday, June 27, for the Fourth of July holiday. Prior to this recess, both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have begun to act at the Subcommittee and Full Committee level on a few appropriations bills. At least two bills of interest to Leon County – the Energy and Water Development bill, and the Labor/HHS/Education bill, should be passed by the House Committee before recess. We will update County staff the week of June 30 on the initial results for Leon County's requests.

While the activity this week, and the likelihood of additional action in July are positive steps, as we have indicated in prior reports, there remains a high level of uncertainty as to whether any appropriations bills (with the possible exception of Defense) will ultimately be passed by both Chambers and sent to the President before the November election.

### **Forest Service Legislation**

There has been no subsequent action on the Forest Service legislation since the hearing held in May in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Committee staff reports that they will use the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess to prepare the Committee's agenda for the remainder of July. It is likely that the Committee will markup the various land transfer bills in July, which were the subject of the May hearing. This will include the "flea-market" tract legislation of interest to Leon County.

### **Amtrak Legislation**

As the Board is aware, the House passed on June 11 HR 6003, The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, which among other things, would direct Amtrak to submit to Congress a plan to establish passenger rail service between, among other places, New Orleans and Sanford,

Florida. The legislation would authorize Amtrak to contract for the operation of an intercity rail service or route that is not included in the national rail passenger transportation system. Four additional requirements are placed on Amtrak to: 1) implement a modern financial accounting and reporting system; 2) submit an annual budget and business plan, along with a five-year financial plan; 3) submit grant requests to the Secretary of Transportation for authorizations of appropriations for specified uses; 4) develop a single, nationwide standardized methodology for establishing and allocating the operating and capital costs among the states and Amtrak associated with trains operated on state-supported routes.

Similar legislation, S. 294, was introduced and passed in the Senate last year. The current Senate bill does not include the language relative to restoration of service between New Orleans and Sanford, as with the House bill. Given the various differences between the House-passed and Senate-passed bills, and House/Senate Conference Committee will need to be formed to reconcile the differences between the bills. It will be during this process which the County and its Congressional Delegation will be able to advocate the House-adopted language related to the New Orleans-Sanford service. We have already communicated Leon County's support for this legislation to Senators Nelson and Martinez, who we expect will be active on this legislation. No Conference Committee has been formed as of yet, and thus no meetings scheduled. Committee staff have indicated to us the desire to look towards the end of July to complete a conference.

### **Climate Legislation**

Congress continues to focus on global warming and climate change. A number of bills have been introduced this year, with varying focus. Some of these bills will be of interest to local governments. Legislation has recently been introduced (S. 2191) that, if passed, would provide grants to local governments to address climate change. Specifically, the bill would provide \$136 billion through 2050 for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program established in the recently passed Energy legislation. The bill would also provide an additional \$171 billion through 2050 for mass transit. We will continue to focus on these types of legislation, and report to the County on the status, and advise on what position the County may wish to take.

### **Grant Opportunities**

Approximately every ten days, Patton Boggs continues to report on new grant opportunities, both Federal and private.

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Please let us know if we can provide any further detail on the issues discussed in this memorandum.