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WEEK OF JANUARY 7, 2019

Public servants, engaged citizens, politicians and powerbrokers gathered in Tallahassee this week for the inauguration of Governor DeSantis and new Cabinet members. The Inaugural ceremonies included various public and private events, luncheons, fundraisers, concerts, prayer breakfast, and the Inaugural Ball. It was notable that the Governor stated in his inauguration speech that he respects the Legislature as a co-equal body. The Governor has wasted no time in implementing his vision: immediately touring areas in recovery from Hurricane Michael and areas impacted by the State's water woes, issuing Executive Orders (below) that call for \$2.5 billion in environmental spending, removing elected officials from office, calling on the Trump Administration to protect Florida disaster funding during the shutdown, calling for resignations of the South Florida Water Management District board and appointing a new Florida Supreme Court Justice. He also announced he will be rescinding a number of last minute appointments made by outgoing Governor Scott, who was also sworn into the U.S. Senate this week, in order to start fresh. As of this update, we also anticipate the Governor's announcement of the suspension of Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel following his leadership during and after the Parkland shooting.

On the flip side, the Legislature held a number of initial committee meetings but most were brief introductory meetings that merely presented an overview of committee jurisdictions. Below are some brief, high-level highlights from the week. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions about anything included in this report.

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DESANTIS TRANSITION

Governor Ron DeSantis appointments and recommendations thus far (some are subject to Senate approval):

- **Director of Office of Policy & Budget (OPB)**- Cynthia Kelley (returning)
- **Chief Inspector General**- Melinda Miguel (returning)
- **Commissioner of Education**- Former House Speaker Richard Corcoran (has been approved by Board of Education)
- **Director of the Division of Emergency Management (DEM)**- Representative Jared Moskowitz
- **Secretary of Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR)**- Representative Halsey Beshears
- **Executive Director of Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)**- Former head of DBPR Ken Lawson
- **President/CEO of Enterprise Florida (EFI)**- Former COS to Port Tampa Bay Jamal Sowell

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- **Secretary of State-** Seminole County Supervisor of Elections Michael Ertel
- **Director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)-** Barbara Palmer (reappointed)
- **Secretary of the Florida Lottery-** Jim Poppell (reappointed)
- **Executive Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs-** Representative Danny Burgess
- **Secretary of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs-** Richard Prudom (former Deputy Secretary and former Chief of Staff for the Dept)
- **Executive Director of the Florida Department of Revenue-** Dr. Jim Zingale
- **Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration-** Mary Mahew, former Commissioner of Maine Health & Human Services and current top official of the Center for Medicaid & CHIP under the Trump Administration.
- **CEO of Visit Florida-** Former Senator Dana Young
- **Secretary of the Department of Children & Families-** Chad Poppell (Leader of IBM Florida Public Services)
- **Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice-** Simone Marstiller (served as a top level official in numerous departments under Governor Bush and Deputy Attorney General under Bill McCollum, former judge)
- **Secretary of the Department of Corrections-** General Mark Inch (former Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons)
- **Surgeon General (Secretary of the Department of Health)-** TBD
- **Secretary of the Department of Management Services-** TBD
- **Secretary of the Department of Transportation-** TBD, the Florida Transportation Commission met this week to officially submit three names for recommendation: Phillip Gainer, District 3 secretary; Richard Biter, former FDOT assistant secretary; and Kevin Thibault, a former top-level FDOT staff who works for TranSystems. The Governor is not required to choose from the FTC list but likely will.

DeSantis has also hired the following key staff positions so far:

- Shane Strum, Chief of Staff
- James Blair, Deputy Chief of Staff
- Adrian Lukis, Deputy Chief of Staff
- Roger Beaubien, Director of Cabinet Affairs
- Stephanie Kipelousos, Director of Legislative Affairs.
- Helen Aguirre Ferre, Director of Communications
- Alex Garcia, Chief of Staff for Lt. Governor-elect Janette Nunez.
- Chris Spencer, Director of Policy

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

House Appropriations heard from the state's top economist Amy Baker on the latest estimates for Florida's budget and economy. Baker explained that revenues exceeded past estimates and that Florida was projected to have approximately \$840 million in additional revenue over the next two years. However, she cautioned lawmakers to be conservative in spending the money as a recession was expected to occur due to both cyclical nature of the economy and due to national/global issues that have caused volatility and uncertainty.



[Presentation](#)

TRANSPORTATION

House Transportation & Infrastructure heard presentations from FDOT on tolling facilities and on the process for planning and funding road projects. Committee members expressed the importance of local level coordination and cooperation among partners in developing the work program. Committee members also criticized tolling operations in the state, questioning their accuracy and impact on tourists. Meanwhile, the House Transportation and Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee overviewed its budget jurisdiction and how programs are funded.

[House T&I Committee Packet](#)

[House TAT Committee Packet](#)

DESANTIS EXECUTIVE ORDER: ACHIEVING MORE NOW FOR FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT

Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 19-12: Achieving More Now for Florida's Environment. While not transportation related, the order is sweeping and gives insight into the priorities of the new Governor. It will remain to be seen if environmental priorities will overtake investment in transportation infrastructure.

The order fulfills a campaign promise to begin addressing Florida's water crisis on day one of his administration. The order includes measures to address Lake Okeechobee, Red Tide, Everglades Restoration, Blue-Green Algae, Water Supply, Apalachicola Bay, Sea Level Rise/Vulnerable Coastlines, Banning Fracking and Offshore Drilling, and Septic Tanks. It also creates a structure that bases Florida's environmental agencies and policies on transparent, scientific data. Just some of the order includes:

- a directive to secure \$2.5 billion over four years for Everglades Restoration and protection of water resources
- establishes Blue-Green Algae Task Force
- expedites the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir and other key Everglades Restoration projects
- directs DEP to establish septic conversion and remediation grant program for local governments
- directs engagement with local governments, universities, industry and other stakeholders to research all viable alternative water sources and fund a recurring water supply grant program
- directs engagement with local governments, industry and other stakeholders for education and outreach on implementing conservation and reuse efforts
- creates the Office of Environmental Accountability and Transparency to coordinate and ensure agency actions align with environmental needs
- creates the position of Chief Science Officer
- creates the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection
- direction to take necessary actions to adamantly oppose offshore drilling and hydraulic

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fracturing in Florida

[Executive Order 19-12](#)