



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

COMMITTEES:

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Appropriations
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Rules

SENATOR BILL MONTFORD

3rd District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: TAYLOR PECK

850-487-5003

SPECIAL SESSION WRAPS UP IN TALLAHASSEE

*Amid Budgetary Constraints Senator Montford Stays Focused
On Senate District 3 Priorities*

TALLAHASSEE - The Florida Legislature reconvened this month for a Special Legislative Session in order to pass a budget. Amid serious budget shortfalls and disagreements about spending, Senator Bill Montford reports District 3 fared fairly well.

"In the Senate we know that with a realistic approach we can continue to cut inefficiencies and increase funding where it is needed most. I worked with my colleagues to ensure that the needs of our district are met and that the State is committed to continue the good work North Florida has started. Senate District 3 is unique in many ways and its' budgetary needs reflect those distinctive characteristics. We have pristine environmental areas and water bodies that need to be protected, local historic sites that must be preserved and unique economic development opportunities to be explored. Education is also a big piece in the State budget, and with a 3% increase in funding statewide I know our schools can continue to support our students. We need to make sure that our District's needs are met and the citizens of North Florida are treated fairly."

Some of the statewide initiatives Senator Montford worked on included:

Agriculture: "As Chair of the Agriculture Committee, I have worked with my colleagues and the Commissioner of Agriculture, Adam Putnam, to make sure we address all of the agriculture issues facing Florida. The laws passed in the regular session and funds appropriated during the Special Session will help ensure Florida continues to be a vital provider to the United States' agriculture needs. We kept a close eye on the agriculture needs of North Florida," said Senator Montford.

Tax Cut Package: Includes an estimated \$400 million in tax cuts for the citizens of Florida. Among them is a reduction in communications-service tax, which is estimated to save an individual who pays \$100 a month for their cell phone service about \$20 a year. It also provides

REPLY TO:

- 214 Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5003
- 20 East Washington Street, Suite D, Quincy, Florida 32351 (850) 627-9100

Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

ANDY GARDINER
President of the Senate

GARRETT RICHTER
President Pro Tempore

a sales tax exemption for agriculture items and a tax reduction on cars purchased by military veterans who were deployed overseas. The bill will also extend the Back to School Sales Tax Holiday to 10 days in August and provide a tax break on school concessions sold at sporting events.

Roads and Transportation: Senator Montford worked to increase the funding in the Small County Resurface Assistance Program, (SCRAP) by \$25 million for a total of \$50.5 million and an additional \$9 million for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) for a total of \$74 million. Both are vital in helping small and rural with transportation projects including:

Wakulla County Airport land acquisition.....	\$175,000
SR 30 (US 98) Coastal Hwy from SR 61 (US 319) to West of Woodville Hwy.....	\$805,740
SR 30 (US 98/us 319) Boykin Road to SR 369.....	\$665,520
SR 30/61 (US 98) Coastal Hwy from Franklin County Line to Boykin Road.....	\$656,160
SR 363 Woodville Hwy from SR 30 (US 98) to Leon County line.....	\$3,000,294
SR 369 (US 319) from East Ivan Road to North of SR 267.....	\$2,133,515
SR 369 (US 319) from North of SR 267 to Leon County line.....	\$2,500,176
SR 61 (US 319) from SR 30 (US 98) to North of Alaska way.....	\$6,465,589
Wakulla County IPAS for traffic signals on-system roadways.....	\$24,776
CR 61 Shadeville Hwy from SR 61 (US 319) to Wakulla Springs Rd.....	\$2,000,165
Fh356 Lawhon Mill Rd over unsigned stream bridge no. 594005.....	\$480,000
Wakulla County senior citizen transit non-urbanized area 5311.....	\$340,000

Increased Environmental Spending: After the voters of Florida overwhelmingly showed their support for Amendment One at the polls, the Legislature got to work creating a long term, sustainable plan to protect pristine Florida. The work product includes \$81.8 million for Everglades restoration, \$55 million to buy land and an unprecedented \$47.5 million in funding for restoration of the State's natural springs. "While this funding is not what most of Florida -- myself included -- had hoped for, it is certainly a start and good sign that Florida is ready to commit to environmental preservation and protection of our springs and other natural resources," said Senator Montford.

State Employees: In a year with so many budget cuts, there were numerous conversations about changes to state employee health insurance coverage, FRS and compensation. Through Senator Montford's diligence, the state employee compensation package was unchanged this year, "I am glad we were able to avoid any changes to the benefits for state employees and retirees, in fact our system is so sound it can be used as an example to other states, there is simply no reason to change it. We also have the lowest per capita ratios of state employees in the country. Florida can be proud of a lean workforce, but with only one raise in eight years and an 11% increase in inflation in the same period, it is time to compensate our state employees for their hard work. With so few doing the work of the State of Florida, it is imperative that we continue to attract the best and brightest with competitive compensation. Although an across-the-board raise was not funded this year, State Forestry Firefighters and State Troopers did see much needed increases. Another extremely important issue addressed was the funding of 163 additional Corrections Officers to help alleviate the staffing gaps. While I am happy with those improvements I will

continue to fight for a long overdue pay raise for state employees and fend off any changes to FRS and state group insurance,” said Senator Montford.

Senator Montford also secured specific allocations for Wakulla County:

St. Marks Boardwalk – Final Phase.....	\$250,000
Restoration of the St. Marks Lighthouse.....	\$250,000
Heritage Village Park Structure.....	\$50,000

*All line items are subject to the Governor’s veto

Senator Bill Montford

Senator Bill Montford (D-Tallahassee) represents the Florida Senate’s third district, which includes the following counties: Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Hamilton, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Wakulla. Senator Montford was first elected to the Senate in 2010 and re-elected in 2012. He serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Vice Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and is a member of the Pre K-12 Education, Appropriations, Banking and Insurance and Rules Committees.

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