



2007 Florida Legislative Session

Property Tax Reform

Few issues received more attention this year than property tax reform. Throughout the session, the House and Senate proposed very different solutions to this common problem. The House's proposal centered around the complete elimination of property taxes with an increase in sales tax to offset the lost revenue. The Senate plan called for a rollback in property tax rates, portability and a Save our Homes protection for commercial property as well. As the Session reached the final days a compromise was unable to be reached and a special session was called for in mid June. Meetings were held throughout session with the legislative leadership to illustrate the challenges faced by the marine industry.

One of the few issues agreed to by all sides was the need to ensure a fair and equitable way to assess waterfront commercial property. The examples used of marinas being taxed out of existence due to "highest and best use" assessments were frequent. The need to continue with protections such as those in the "Working Waterfronts" legislation was also universally accepted.

The House and Senate continue to meet to discuss a solution with the challenges faced by the marine industry being prominently discussed and considered. During a series of public hearings, MIASF and other marine related interests commented on the impacts of property taxes on marine businesses.

Marine Retention Efforts/Study

MIASF also worked this year on several issues related to studying the effects of our current policies and incentive packages for the retention of marine businesses in Florida. Amendments were successfully offered to legislation requiring the Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to compare Florida's incentives to that of other comparable states. It is MIASF's belief that in viewing the marine community as a true "industry" we need to re-examine how we protect our local businesses and attract new companies to Florida.