



# **2017 Community Advocacy Agenda**

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# Local Agenda Items

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**Municipality:** Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs

**Agenda Item:** Beach Renourishment

\*Local issue decided by state and federal government

**Agenda Item Description:** Over time our beaches suffer loss of beachfront as a natural result of storms and hurricanes. Renourishment projects in Pinellas County have been approved and secured proper permits, however, state and federal officials need to secure adequate funding. The county pays 20%, the state pays 20% and the Federal government pays 60%. The Army Corps of Engineers continuously assess the cost of renourishing the beaches after the damage is incurred. However, there is always a possibility that our beaches might not receive the necessary funding.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for state and federal funding towards beach renourishment. 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. Without our award winning beaches, Pinellas County would not be the tourist destination it is today.

**Useful Resources:**

- More Information: [www.VisitStPeteClearwater.com](http://www.VisitStPeteClearwater.com)
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** Urge state and federal elected officials to secure adequate funding for our beach renourishment projects.

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**Municipality:** Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs

**Agenda Item:** Business Development

\*Local issue decided by municipal, county, state and federal government

**Agenda Item Description:** A growing number of businesses have had difficulty doing business due to burdening regulations. Business owners also receive conflicting information from municipal staff, commissioners and city managers. This can delay work or add additional work drastically increasing the time-frame and cost for the business owner. Furthermore, some regulations already on the book have unintended consequences that actually prevent business owners from updating or improving their property.

**Current Status:** The TBBCoC advocates for a streamlined, consistent process to open a business allowing business owners to invest in our community. Burdensome regulations that prevent business owners from upgrading or improving their property need to be reduced or eliminated.

**Useful Resources:** TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** Work with all forms of government to reduce burdening regulations, provide new business orientation and provide consistent messaging for city staff. Work with municipalities to include business input when updating regulations.

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**Municipality:** St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island and Madeira Beach

**Agenda Item:** Economic Development

**Agenda Item Description:** A majority of our accommodations were built 50 years ago or more and are outdated (sewage, electrical, ADA, FEMA, room size, amenities, etc). Therefore, we need to redevelop properties to be competitive in the tourism market. Newer hotels offer larger rooms and other amenities that are only made possible by new construction.

**Current Status:** TBBCOC advocates for responsible redevelopment and is working with local municipalities to allow for redevelopment along the beaches. Current regulations may prevent hotel redevelopment due to height and density restrictions which prevent hotels from being profitable and 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.

**Useful Resources:** TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** Attend commission meetings and speak during the public comment period in favor of reducing restrictions on redevelopment to allow municipalities to be competitive in the marketplace. Also, be a part of the TBBCOC Economic Development Task Force.

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**Municipality:** Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs

**Agenda Item:** Pedestrian Safety

**Agenda Item Description:** Pedestrian safety is a hot topic across the county. Florida is consistently recognized for the highest number of pedestrian fatalities per capita. Promotion and education of the crosswalk system along SR699 (Gulf Boulevard) is a major concern to businesses and leaders.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for the promotion and education of crosswalks throughout Gulf Boulevard. The TBBCoC continues to work with WalkWise Tampa Bay on a campaign to educate the local community. The TBBCoC continues to offer educational material directed toward the people actually using the crosswalks along Gulf Boulevard, the visitors. The TBBCoC provides educational pieces in to businesses along the beaches that direct residents and visitors on how to use the unique crosswalk systems.

**Useful Resources:**

- More Information: <http://walkwisetampabay.com/>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

**Action:** Word of mouth is the best way to educate. Also, distribute educational material available at the TBBCoC.

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**Agenda Item:** **Transient Boat Docks**

**Agenda Item Description:** There is a lack of transient boat docking along the beaches. Additional transient docks will enhance the business climate and create a unique, prosperous tourist destination. Additional transient boat docks will allow visitors and residents to patronize local businesses and attractions. Such dock space is nearly nonexistent along the beaches and would meet a longstanding need.

**Current Status:** TBBCOC advocates for additional transient boat docks along our beaches. The addition of transient boat docks will not only enhance our economy and business climate, but also enhance our quality of life. Additional transient boat docks will help to build and revitalize the gulf economy by providing a high-amenity destination for recreational boaters and benefit local businesses by generating new revenue brought in by the additional customer base. Parking spaces are limited along our beaches and the additional transient boat docks are a good alternative to allow more residents and visitors to patronize our local businesses.

**Useful Resources:** TBBCoC Advocacy: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

**Action:** Attend commission meetings and speak during the public comment period in favor of reducing restrictions on redevelopment to allow municipalities to be competitive in the marketplace.

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**Municipality:** **Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs**

**Agenda Item:** **Waterborne Transportation**

**Agenda Item Description:** Given the unique geography of our beach communities, embracing all forms of transportation is essential. Waterborne Transit will alleviate traffic and parking congestion and provide entertainment for passengers by showcasing our breathtaking views and sights.

**Current Status:** TBBCOC advocates for waterborne transportation that consists of regularly scheduled stops along the beaches. The TBBCOC will assist in the following to ensure the success of waterborne transportation:

- Completion/expansion of routes, adoption of sample ordinance, enhanced exposure, meetings with hoteliers, facilitation of town halls, creation of task force

**Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>
- Hubbard's Marina Water Taxi: <http://www.tampabayferry.com/>
- Clearwater Ferry: <http://www.clearwaterferry.com/>

**Action:** Attend commission meetings and urge municipalities to adopt an ordinance to allow for waterborne transportation. Spread the word of these new waterborne transportation services and encourage ridership.

# County Agenda

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## **Agenda Item: Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)**

**Agenda Item Description:** PACE would allow commercial property owners to borrow money from private operators for conservation or clean energy upgrades and pay it back through a surcharge on their property tax bill. If a property is sold, repayment obligations are transferred to the new owner.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for county and municipal governments to work with numerous providers to create the PACE program. Once a provider and agreements have been vetted at staff level, it would go to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. The goal is to eventually bring in numerous providers to our area.

### **Useful Resources:**

- More Information: <http://energy.gov/eere/slsc/property-assessed-clean-energy-programs>
- Energy Upgrades: [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0100-0199/0163/Sections/0163.08.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0100-0199/0163/Sections/0163.08.html)
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

**Action:** The TBBCoC will work closely with county and local officials to assure success of this program.

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## **Agenda Item: Penny for Pinellas**

**Agenda Item Description:** Gulf Boulevard has long been an area attraction for tourists accessing the County's beaches. The Gulf Boulevard Improvement Project was developed and adopted by Board of County Commissioners in 2001. The program included undergrounding of utilities, streetscape enhancements, and pedestrian safety improvements. Funding runs until 2020 and a vote to extend the penny will take place in 2017. If cities do not use the funds allocated to them by December of 2019, funds remain in city budgets.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for reauthorization of the Penny for Pinellas for undergrounding of utilities, pedestrian safety, streetscape enhancement and infrastructure improvement along Gulf Boulevard which will allow for the following.

- Improved business, visitor, and resident quality of life.
- Unification of beach communities through common amenities and streetscape improvements.
- Elimination of visual blight caused by overhead utilities.
- Development of an attractive roadway experience to spur tourism and economic development.

### **Useful Resources:**

- More Information: [http://www.pinellascounty.org/bcc-agenda/2012\\_07\\_10/supplement-16.pdf](http://www.pinellascounty.org/bcc-agenda/2012_07_10/supplement-16.pdf)
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/chamber/advocacy.aspx>

**Action:** TBBCoC will work closely with county and local officials to assure the completion of these projects.

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**Agenda Item: Tourist Development Tax: Enforcement**

**Agenda Item Description:** Enforcing residents, who rent their properties to tourists, pay the Tourist Development Tax is essential to promote our destination, attract visitors and support the tourism Industry. Enforcing residential rental properties to pay the Tourist Development Tax will create fair and equitable funding opportunities for all rental properties and legitimate businesses.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for enforcing collection of the Tourist Development Tax. Residential rental properties are required to pay their fair share of the Tourist Development Tax. However, some properties are being rented illegally and are not paying the Tourism Development Tax. In some cases, municipalities don't allow residential properties to be rented. The tax of six cents per dollar is supposed to be levied not just on motel or hotel stays, but on all "transient accommodations" of six months or less. That includes vacation or seasonal stays at townhouses, condominiums, timeshares, single-family homes, mobile homes, beach cottages and rooming houses.

**Useful Resources:**

- More Information: <http://www.pinellascvb.com/cms/index.php?id=6>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** TBBCoC is working with municipal, county and state officials towards a solution.

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**Agenda Item: Tourist Development Tax: Preservation**

**Agenda Item Description:** Preserving the Bed Tax for its intended purpose is essential to promote our destination, attract visitors, and support the tourism Industry. Preserving the Bed Tax for its intended purpose will create fair and equitable funding opportunities for all.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for preserving the Tourist Development Tax for its intended purpose. The TBBCOC opposes any language in county or state legislation that would expand the use. Expanding the use of the Tourist Development Tax sets precedence for future changes and further expanded uses. This could result in funds being appropriated for things that don't meet the sufficient requirements which will take away from the intended purpose, attracting visitors to our area. The Tourist Development Tax is a six percent tax collected on accommodations rented for less than six months. The tax is used to strengthen the local economy and increase employment through the ongoing promotion and development of tourism; Pinellas County's major industry.

**Bed Tax Uses**



**Useful Resources:**

- More Information: <http://www.pinellascvb.com/cms/index.php?id=6>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** TBBCoC is attending all Tourist Development Council Meetings to stay informed and is speaking with Pinellas County Board of Commissioners to guarantee they fully understand the preservation of these funds.

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## **Agenda Item: Sales Tax Recalculation**

**Agenda Item Description:** Beach municipalities see millions of visitors every year. These visitors generate massive amounts of sales tax revenue when they shop, dine and patronize local attractions. However, the formula used to distribute sales tax revenue back to municipalities doesn't take into account visitors and is instead based on the number of full-time residents. Beach municipalities need a sales tax redistribution formula that is fair and takes into account visitors in an effort to maintain infrastructure - i.e. sewers, roads, bridges, transportation, etc.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for a fair distribution of sales tax revenue. The formula used to return sales tax revenue back to municipalities should be recalculated to take into account the millions of visitors that pay sales tax on every purchase they make.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** Contact Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners.

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## **Agenda Item: Transportation**

\*County issue decided by state government

**Agenda Item Description:** Navigating throughout Pinellas County is no easy task. Traveling to the beaches from our airports or attractions can be burdensome and may discourage tourists from returning. A direct public transportation connection between Pinellas County beaches and Tampa International Airport will support the thousands of tourists and residents who travel on our roads every day.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for funding from the state for the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's (PSTA) proposed express service to and from Tampa International airport and the beaches. The proposed express service is designed to enhance public transportation for residents, businesses and visitors. Pinellas County is competing with all counties in Florida to be the best and brightest. We want to attract the most jobs and tourists. If we do nothing, our infrastructure will suffer and degrade over time. Residents, tourists and employers will move away to a better county. We need to invest in our infrastructure to improve our overall quality of life. If we don't move forward, we will fall behind. Let's move forward.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

### **Action:**

- Contact the Appropriations Chairman, Senator Latvala and urge him to support funding for PSTA's proposed express service to and from Tampa International Airport and the beaches.
  - Contact Florida Senator Jeff Brandes, Chair of Transportation Committee, and urge him to take action.
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## **Agenda Item: Water Quality**

**Agenda Item Description:** Pinellas County is a top tourist destination because of world class beaches and pristine waterways. To remain a top tourist destination, our most valuable assets need to be protected. Local governments need to stop dumping sewage into the waterways. In 2016, municipalities discharged sewage into the waterways. This discharge had an adverse effect on waterways and force beaches to close due to high levels of bacteria. The news ran articles referencing closed beaches and high levels of bacteria in our waterways. Closed beaches and bad press hurts our local tourism, economy and overall quality of life.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for the protection of waterways. Municipalities need to fix and upgrade their infrastructure to adequately handle the amount of sewer and storm water generated. Some municipalities have started this process and once complete need to do regular maintenance. Regular maintenance is essential to maintain efficiency, extend infrastructure lifespan and lower costs.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** Contact County and municipal officials and urge them to invest in our infrastructure.

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## **Agenda Item: Workforce Development**

**Agenda Item Description:** There is an influx in open positions along the beaches. Many businesses are having difficulties finding individuals to fill open positions. Most individuals applying for jobs are unqualified. However, the bigger issue affecting businesses is that there are not enough people applying for the jobs to fill open positions.

**Current Status:** TBBCOC advocates for an enhanced pool of qualified workers. To remain competitive in a changing economy, Florida needs to advance the economic well-being by developing and maintaining a quality workforce and by serving as the focal point for our workforce development initiatives. This is to be achieved through the co-location and integration of employment, training, education and economic development services for job seekers, workers and employers.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

**Action:** Urge your elected officials to support workforce development

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# State Agenda

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## Agenda Item: **Business Rent Tax**

**Agenda Item Description:** Regardless of size or complexity of a commercial lease transaction, Florida requires sales tax to be paid on certain lease-related charges. Florida is the only state that imposes a specific sales tax on commercial real estate leases. This excessive tax is subjecting Florida businesses to disproportionate regulatory burdens; creating instances of double taxation; and sacrificing our competitiveness in securing more corporate headquarters and other employers into the state—ultimately costing Florida jobs.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for lowering the business rent tax from 6% to 5% to save businesses and estimated \$286.9 million annually, create over 185,000 jobs and move towards a fair and level playing field for all businesses. The tax makes up a large portion of our state budget and cannot be removed all at once, but rather phased out overtime. Florida needs to phase this tax out in an effort to get rid of unfair double taxation, specifically tenants paying sales taxes on property taxes paid as part of their leases.

### Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

**Action:** Urge state elected officials to lower the Business Rent Tax.

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## Agenda Item: **Film Florida**

**Agenda Item Description:** Pinellas County has benefited from major feature films (Dolphin Tale, Dolphin Tale 2, Spring Breakers, Magic Mike) and several independent films, spending more than \$5 million in recent years. During the 2014 legislative session, Florida's Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive program was not allocated additional tax credits and there are presently no tax credits available.

- 73% of Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMS) visitors came to CMA because they saw Dolphin Tale
- 3,000 were employed as a result of filming of Dolphin Tale

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for Film Florida and their mission to ensure success of Florida's Film Industry. In order to ensure success of Florida's Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive program the film, TV, commercial & media production industry asks for your support of the following priorities:

- Additional funding for the remaining fiscal years of the program
- Additional long-term commitment to the program in the form of additional years or no sunset
- Adequate funding for the Office of Film & Entertainment
- Contract with Film Florida to create a public-private partnership that will provide consistent leadership for Florida's entertainment production industries.

### Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

**Action:** Urge state elected officials to support Film Florida

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## **Agenda Item: Expansion of Gaming**

**Agenda Item Description:** Florida is a premier location to live, work and visit. For a more competitive Florida, we must protect Florida's unique quality of life by ensuring Florida remains one of the most family-friendly places. Casinos are not family friendly, and bringing them to Florida would only drive our family friendly tourists to other locations. Once one casino comes to town, the rest of the casinos will follow.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC opposes the expansion of gaming in Florida. The Gambling Impact Study showed several kinds of unavoidable costs associated with expanded gambling: crime of all sorts, health problems associated with pathological or problem gambling, political corruption, personal bankruptcies caused by problem gambling and more. Vegas-Style casinos are all inclusive. All the restaurants, shops, and entertainment are self-contained within the casinos. This takes away from the mom and pop businesses, ultimately running them out of business.

### **Useful Resources:**

- The Gambling Impact Study Report: <http://bit.ly/17tSiQc>
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** Urge state elected officials to oppose the Expansion of Gaming.

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## **Agenda Item: Insurance Reform (Property, Flood, Workers Compensation)**

**Agenda Item Description:** Creating a competitive and stable insurance market will lower costs in Florida's current insurance market. Florida must continue initiatives like reforming flood insurance, property insurance and workers' compensation insurance by spreading risks, reducing fraudulent claims and allowing for creative solutions for the issues homeowners and businesses face.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for insurance reform allowing alternatives for residents and business owners on the verge of bankruptcy. Fixing Florida's broken insurance system to reduce taxpayer risk in the event of a catastrophic storm and reduce inflated workers' compensation rates is a step in the right direction. Instead of short-term quick fixes, long-term solutions are the focus to grow the private-sector and help small businesses and families.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

**Action:** Urge state elected officials to support insurance reform.

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## **Agenda Item: Reliable and Cost Effective Energy Solutions**

**Agenda Item Description:** Florida needs to achieve a stable, reliable and diverse supply of energy. Energy policy requires a stable, predictable regulatory and business climate while promoting energy resources that further fuel source diversification through the deployment of existing and alternative energy sources. Florida must renew its commitment to energy resources and technologies which result in the creation of new jobs within the state. Florida also needs to remain committed to consumer education on energy while continuing to modernize and expand existing energy infrastructure to ensure it is ready for the challenges of the 21st century.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for an energy policy that puts the long-term over the short-term and rests on reliable, cost effective energy sources to grow the economy. This type of policy will increase energy independence and promote the use of domestic energy sources. It would also include advanced technologies and pave the way for sustainable economic growth. Recognizing Florida's current economic conditions, as well as future economic growth, we are working to make sure that Florida's needs are met with an energy policy that responds to new technology and changes in the market while bringing in new capital for investment and increasing energy security.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

**Action:** Urge state elected officials to support Reliable and Effective Energy Solutions.

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## **Agenda Item: School Start Date**

**Agenda Item Description:** Some school districts want an earlier start to the school year so the first semester can be wrapped up before Christmas. However, tourism leaders, parents and teachers say an early start hurts tourism and infringes on family vacation time. Hotel operators want families to be able to take end-of-summer vacations without missing any school days.

**Current Status:** TBBCOC advocates for moving the start of the schoolyear to a later date. In 2006, legislation was passed stating that the school year start date could not begin any sooner than 14 days prior to Labor Day. However, 2016 legislation passed giving local school boards ability to change the beginning of the school year from "14 days before Labor Day" to no earlier than the 10th of August. One of our top priorities for our industry is to move start of the schoolyear to a later date.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

**Action:** Urge state elected officials to move the start of the schoolyear to a later date.

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## **Agenda Item: Tourism**

**Agenda Item Description:** As the Sunshine State's No. 1 industry, tourism was responsible for welcoming 106+ million visitors in 2016 and employing more than 1.3 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 – \$3.20 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.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for the tourism industry to receive adequate funding and resources 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. After VISIT FLORIDA increased marketing by \$50 million, \$30 billion in visitor spending was collected and Sales Tax collections are up \$1.6 billion. Florida is aiming to bring in \$100 billion in total tourism related spending by 2020, however, attracting more tourists isn't the key strategy in driving up dollars. The influx will come from the experience rather than filling more hotel beds. The new strategy is less about bringing in more bodies and more about tapping into consumer markets that want to spend dollars in the state.

### **Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/>
- Track Senate Legislation: <http://www.flsenate.gov/>

**Action:** Urge state elected officials to adequately fund VISIT FLORIDA and support the tourism industry as it is Florida's number one industry.

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# Federal Agenda

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## **Agenda Item: Airport Infrastructure Funding**

**Agenda Item Description:** Federal funding for airport infrastructure has been lacking in recent years and the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) has not been raised since 2000. The PFC is a \$4.50 fee on every plane ticket. \$4.50 from every ticket goes back to the airport for capital improvement. The PFC has not been raised since 2000 and should be between \$6 and \$8 due to inflation. Airports want to have the authority to raise the rate. Right now the rate is set by congress. If Tampa International Airport (TIA) received authority to raise their rate, they would not raise it more than \$2. The US travel association, TIA, St. Pete/Clearwater International Airport (PIE) and the Pinellas County Tourist Development Council are all in full support of allowing airport authority to set their own rates.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for an increase in airport infrastructure funding in an effort to remain competitive as a top travel destination. TBBCoC supports an increase in federal funding as well as congressional approval for individual airports to have authority to increase their PFC. People travel from all over the world to visit our country. Many other countries have world class airports while airports in the United States are decades old and dilapidating. The United States must not fall behind other countries and must remain competitive in an effort to support tourism and our economy.

**Useful Resources:** TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>

**Action:** Urge federal elected officials to support an increase in funding for airport infrastructure and allow individual airports to have authority to increase their Passenger Facility Charge (PFC).

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## **Agenda Item: Fisheries**

**Agenda Item Description:** Recreational and commercial fishing have been critical to our quality of life and our economy here in Pinellas for generations. We must do more to responsibly reduce the number of fishery closures and to invest in responsible stock enhancement. We need to improve how we manage fishery closures that hurt our economy and our way of life.

**Current Status:** The TBBCoC advocates for sound management and conservation of marine resources and maximize the opportunity to fish and are pursuing the four following principals:

- Move decision making process on fishery closures from the National Marine Fisheries Service in Washington to the regional council level closest to the local stakeholders in our state and community – in our case, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council;
- Remove the Department of Commerce’s ability to veto gubernatorial appointments to the regional councils
- Redirect current funding to further invest in enhanced fish habitats
- Redirect current funding to improve research related to survivability of juvenile fish stocks

**Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track Legislation: <https://www.govtrack.us/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

**Action:** Urge federal elected officials to support the four principals toward responsibly managing our fisheries.

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**Agenda Item: Insurance Reform**

**Agenda Item Description:** We all depend on reasonably priced insurance to live safe and healthy lives. Yet because of oversight on insurance industry activities, insurers impose rate hikes that are so astronomical that they threaten the ability of businesses, employees and homeowners to function. The insurance industry has created liability insurance crises making insurance unaffordable or in some cases, unavailable at any price. Effective reforms are needed for flood insurance for a stable economy.

**Current Status:** TBBCoC advocates for insurance reform to control skyrocketing insurance rates, reduced insurance coverage, arbitrary policy cancellations, mismanagement and other insurance industry abuses. Biggert-Waters flood insurance legislation will be reauthorized in 2017 and congress needs to ensure affordable and reliable flood insurance options are included to help property owners on the verge of bankruptcy due to unaffordable rate increase.

**Useful Resources:**

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website: <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track Legislation: <https://www.govtrack.us/>
- Download iCitizen App: <http://www.icitizen.com>

**Action:** Urge federal elected officials to support insurance reform

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