



Streamlining Florida's Regulatory Process

Overview of Florida TaxWatch Research and Task Force

Phase 1 – Development & Construction

ISSUE:

As Florida has grown to become nearly the third largest state in the country, its rules and regulations have become challenging to business operation and growth. A complexity of local, state, and federal agencies are involved in regulation and overseeing the myriad of bureaucratic processes. While some regulation is important to public safety and an orderly society, too much regulation can be stifling. In Florida, the cost of regulation to business represents a growing share of the cost of economic development.

During the recent decade of rapid economic growth, the costs of regulation could more easily be absorbed and thus overlooked. In today's economic downturn, coupled with a disparate property tax system, rising insurance and other costs, and the growing cost of government and its pass-along fees, these regulatory costs can no longer be ignored, especially as rival Sunbelt states have become an enticing alternative place in which to live and conduct business. Florida's businesses are now experiencing the significant consequences of unequal and cumbersome tax and regulatory policy. Are we discouraging economic growth in Florida with the current framework and processes of our regulation?

GOALS:

Florida TaxWatch proposes a study to accomplish the following goals:

- ✓ Underscore the critical importance of a "Balanced" regulatory process;
- ✓ Emphasize innovation and vitality. A positive and balanced regulatory process isn't an end unto itself, but rather a step to insure that our path to positive innovation and growth is paved by well reasoned processes that insure compliance, but also recognize the need for regulations that reflect the dynamic nature of economic development where we have to compete with other states and countries.
- ✓ Provide economic impact summaries, pointing out examples where our policies and practices have led to loss of industry, jobs, Gross State Product, and tax revenue, and where a more thoughtful approach might have had the opposite effect.

The Florida TaxWatch Task Force and research recommendations will make a positive contribution to the state and regulatory agencies on why they're critical, what needs to change and the impact that "not changing" is currently having on this state's growth and competitive posture.

RESEARCH OUTLINE:

Given the slowdown in Florida's economy, the time is right to act by creating a Task Force within the Florida TaxWatch Center for Competitive Florida to address this issue. The Task Force's purpose is to reveal and quantify the:

- Disconnect between the stated goals of our public policies and the manner in which government goes about accomplishing them;
- Growth in cost of regulation on existing businesses and those locating to Florida.
- Evidence that our environmental and growth management laws are increasing the cost of housing, while backlogs in needed infrastructure necessary to growth are ignored.

The Task Force will be used to gather information that will foster research that can support meaningful regulatory reform. The Task Force will be comprised of respected industry individuals and policy experts from different disciplines. Topical areas, across several industries and economic sectors, will include duplicate regulation and bureaucracy, the effect of the growing use of fees, disproportionate taxing relative to "sister" states, and laws and regulations stifling competitiveness, such as immigration policies and trade regulations.