

January 2015 Legislative Update  
By Phil Leary, AIPC

The second committee week of the 2015 calendar year has come to a close, and this year is already off to a fast and busy start. The 2015 Legislative Session is just around the corner, beginning Tuesday, March 3, and there several high-profile issues facing the Legislature in the next three months. There will be three more weeks of interim committee meetings in February before the start of the regular session. I will be sending updates and special alerts over the next three months, and will also be asking for you to contact legislators in support of legislation effecting FAPG and PG's.

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The Florida Legislature looks to tackle several hot-button issues including Seminole Indian Gaming Compact, Destination Casinos, Medicare Funding, School Vouchers and Medical Marijuana during the upcoming 60-day session, and there will also be at least two major water/environmental bills. Cabinet officials and legislative leadership will certainly have priority issues they want passed. FAPG has an important issue dealing with the CCNA and Chapter 287 F.S. not including PG's, it will be a priority for changing the statue and eventually a rule change, for me and the Association this session. Adding PG's to the qualified professionals in Chapter 287 and the CCNA only makes sense, especially considering that legislation we passed two sessions ago established PG's as design professionals in Chapter 550.

#### Water Policy:

It is no secret that a statewide, comprehensive water policy is the top legislative issue for Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli, Senate President Andy Gardiner and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam. I will be working closely with legislative leadership, Commissioner Putnam, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Environmental Protection and other stakeholders on a water policy focused on implementing and improving existing regulatory structures instead of creating new ones.

Last Thursday, in both the House State Affairs Committee and the Senate Agriculture Committee, Commissioner Adam Putnam laid out a strong vision for a flexible, robust water policy he hopes to accomplish before the end of session. "Our core values and our identity as a state are attached to water," said Putnam "We have an opportunity to think big and act boldly, and I'm excited about the opportunity."

What I expect to be an omnibus water policy bill should surface before the first week of session and I will be seeking your input on the proposed legislation. Another important legislative issue, the Senate Environmental Preservation Committee is seeking public comment regarding use of funds concerning Amendment 1. Please go to the link below to make comments. This is an opportunity for FAPG and our members to have direct input on what the priorities will be for the funding, estimated to be over \$300 million this year, will be allocated for acquisition, restoration and water supply development projects.

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