



March 25, 2020

**VIA E-MAIL**

Governor Ron DeSantis  
State of Florida  
The Capital  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
([ron.desantis@eog.myflorida.com](mailto:ron.desantis@eog.myflorida.com))

RE: Request for Governor Veto of SB 410

Governor DeSantis,

I write in my personal capacity as well as in my capacity as President of the 501(c)(3) organization Save Rural Seminole. Save Rural Seminole is a Seminole County based non-profit which is dedicated to addressing threats to Seminole County's voter approved Rural Boundary. I write to urge that you exercise your authority to veto Senate Bill 410. There are three fatal problems with the bill, each of which justify a veto. First, as a matter of policy it is a catastrophic threat to our local ability to control sprawl and preserve natural lands. Second, the bill unconstitutionally puts unfunded mandates upon local government. Third, the problematic portion of the proposed legislation was procedurally dubious as it was a last-minute addition which made fundamental changes to the bill. These changes were not understood by those who believed they were moving a bill forward which was functionally equivalent to the one they had originally voted on.

I will focus my letter on the first reason listed above. The second reason is addressed well in the March 19, 2020 letter written to you by the Florida Association of Counties ("FAC"). The third reason is also addressed in FAC's letter as well as in the March 17, 2020 letter written to you by Representative David Smith and the March 18, 2020 letter to you by 1000 Friends of Florida. Representative Smith's own voting history on the bill juxtaposed with his letter speaks volumes about the substantive, last minute, and under-the-radar change that was made to the Bill. All three issues and important background was also addressed in the Orlando Sentinel's March 16, 2020 article by the Editorial Board titled Seminole's Zombie River Cross Project Finds New Life in the Legislature, which I encourage you to read:

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/editorials/os-op-legislature-river-cross-project-seminole-20200316-6dbu3n3vk5gcjo2e5emkemqmze-story.html>.

The new language of Fla. Stat. 163.3167(11) which would be created by SB 410 would have the effect of gutting a county's ability to manage urban sprawl and protect rural areas. Allowing for county-wide land management plans is vital to address the various needs of a community. This includes allowing a county to plan for areas of higher density housing, areas of affordable housing, and areas of rural conservation. SB 410 would completely undermine this ability to properly plan. As a result, the county planning will be bypassed and each city will be petitioned by developers to approve projects which make the developer as much money as possible but undermine the county-wide public interests. Most specifically to those of us in Seminole County, is that developers will undermine the integrity of the Rural Boundary by annexing properties into adjacent cities and then have those cities rezone the properties in manners which are completely inconsistent with the will of the County's voters as expressed in the 2004 Rural Boundary referendum. In short, this is nothing but a developer-backed scheme to overfill their pockets at the expense of the County residents' quality of life. A similar back-door effort was made by developers in 2018 through HB 883. Thankfully that effort was sniffed out in time and stopped before it passed. This time the lobbyists were trickier and used the reconciliation process to slip this last-minute change into SB 410, resulting in it passing without those who were voting on it knowing of the substantive change.

Thankfully, though, you have an opportunity to stop this horrible bill. Governor, you have taken many wonderful steps to preserve Florida's environment since being elected. In doing so, you have won over as likely new supporters many who care deeply about these issues. I urge you in the strongest terms to continue with your track record of preserving natural Florida by vetoing SB 410. If you fail to do so, the rural character of east Seminole County which the residents voted to protect and many of us have spent countless hours fighting for will be paved over with perpetual sprawl.

If you or any of your staff would like to discuss any of these issues, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 321-888-3955 or by e-mail at [David@BearLegalSolutions.com](mailto:David@BearLegalSolutions.com).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DB', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

David R. Bear

cc: Stephanie Kopelousos