



The Florida House of Representatives

Dean Cannon
Speaker

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Florida House of Representatives

FROM: Dean Cannon, Speaker

DATE: December 7, 2010

RE: Creation of Select Committee

The Florida House has made good use of the select committee process during the past several years. Select committees allow Members to address complex issues in a thoughtful, comprehensive way that can be difficult to do in standing committees whose primary focus tends to be on the consideration of bills and on agency oversight functions. In recent years, select committees have addressed topics as complex as eminent domain, gaming, and Medicaid.

Over the next two years, I intend to use the select committee process to spotlight specific problems in the state that will require extraordinary work and focus. These select committees will not be formed with any pre-determined agenda, but will instead provide a forum for the careful, public examination of serious policy issues with the goal of developing a broad consensus for reform.

The use and management of our natural resources presents one of the most pressing challenges for the long-term health of our state. In recent years, we have seen the development of a wide range of issues with respect to water policy within Florida and changes to Federal policy that may significantly impact Florida's ability to manage its own resources.

Florida's water resource policies are incorporated into the "Florida Water Resources Act of 1972." The Florida Water Resources Act was developed at a time when the state relied primarily on inexpensive groundwater as the primary source for its water supply needs. It is appropriate that the Legislature carefully examine these basic policies that were established almost 40 years ago. We must thoughtfully address the profoundly important issue of Florida's water resources before our problems develop into a crisis.

Therefore, in accordance with House Rules 7.6 and 7.24(b), I am creating the Select Committee on Water Policy and directing the select committee to conduct a comprehensive review of the state's water policies and recommend legislative actions to further ensure Florida uses its water resources in an effective and sustainable manner to meet future water supply needs. The Select Committee shall report its preliminary findings and recommendations prior to the 2011 Legislative Session and its final findings and recommendations prior to the 2012 Legislative Session.

I am pleased to appoint Representative Trudi Williams as Chair of the Select Committee on Water Policy. Throughout the length of her service in the Florida House, Representative Williams has been a leading voice on water policy issues, and she has spent the last four years as the chair of committees dealing with natural resource issues. I have great confidence in Representative Williams' ability to manage this important issue and to develop a consensus solution that will benefit Florida for years to come.

It is very important that in developing a comprehensive approach to water policy, we provide an equal voice to all the regions and all the constituencies within Florida. Consequently, I have asked Representative Brad Drake to serve as Vice Chair of the Select Committee on Water Policy. Representative Drake has demonstrated a keen interest in water issues and will provide an important perspective on these issues.

Appointments to this select committee will be made next week along with remaining committee assignments. Members who are interested in serving on the Select Committee on Water Policy should contact Lynn Imhof in the Speaker's Office by the close of business on Thursday, December 9, 2010.

I have assigned Karen Camechis, Deputy Staff Director for the State Affairs Committee, to serve as the lead staff for the select committee. We will allocate additional staff resources once Chair Williams and Vice Chair Drake have developed a plan for moving forward.