

FLOATING SOLAR FACILITIES

Local Governments Required to Allow for Floating Solar Facilities in Comprehensive Plan:

[House Bill 1411](#) creates section 163.32051, Florida Statutes, which encourages the use of floating solar facilities. The Legislature has found that floating solar facilities are effective tools for harnessing energy in bodies of water for numerous reasons, including the water's cooling effect on the solar panels and the prevention of evaporation and harmful algal blooms. Therefore, the bill encourages local governments to permit these solar facilities as appropriate uses of water and land areas. The bill limits the placement of floating solar facilities to bodies of water that have been permitted for storage, which includes wastewater treatment ponds, abandoned limerock mine areas, stormwater treatment ponds, reclaimed water ponds, and other water storage reservoirs.

The bill *requires* local governments to make floating solar facilities a permitted use in appropriate land use categories within each local government's comprehensive plan. Further, each local government must amend its land development regulation to promote the expanded use of such facilities. While the bill allows local governments to adopt buffer and landscape requirements for solar facilities, these limitations may not exceed the buffer and landscape requirements for similar uses permitted in agricultural land use categories and zoning districts. The bill prohibits floating solar facilities in an Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir project if the local government determines that it will have a negative impact on that project. The bill further requires the Office of Energy to develop and submit recommendations to the Legislature to provide a regulatory framework by December 31, 2022. HB 1411 was signed into law on April 27, 2022 and went into effect on July 1, 2022.