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CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

June 13, 2008

Secretary Kurt S. Browning
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
2008 JUN 14 PM 2:10
FILED

Dear Secretary Browning:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby withhold my approval of and transmit to you my objections to House Bill 5067, enacted during the 110th Session of the Legislature of Florida, since statehood in 1845, during the Regular Session of 2008 and entitled:

An act relating to State Infrastructure. . .

There are several positive aspects to the bill which makes changes pertaining to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Department of Transportation. For instance, the bill moves Florida a step closer to implementing the federal REAL ID Act. It conforms transportation laws to federal safety requirements to secure federal funding. The bill confirms practices already in effect in between these departments. Many of these same provisions are proposed in Senate Bill 1992, which I intend to sign.

Notably, the General Appropriations Act authorizes a five percent pay increase for Florida's Highway Patrol Troopers which will be achieved within departmental resources. And where there are means within the law to make other good operational changes proposed in this bill, I will direct my executive branch agencies to do so.

There is, however, a provision in this bill pertaining to the Department of Transportation that I am compelled to address. Section 35 of the bill directs the selection process for fuel, food, and other service contracts along the Florida Turnpike. The provision is troubling in that the Turnpike Enterprise is directed to substantially deviate from established procurement laws put in place to ensure fairness and integrity in the selection process. Limiting the competitiveness of the procurement and squeezing out potential bidders increases costs to the Turnpike System; therefore, increasing costs to Florida's motorists.

I have based my administration upon openness and access to information. Specifically, I have directed agencies to conduct open, competitive, and transparent procurements. I believe that we must protect the confidence citizens have entrusted to their public servants, and we should commit to making the best use of their hard earned tax dollars. Therefore, it is disappointing that the Legislature has used this bill to direct a procurement which benefits vendors over the citizens of Florida.

For these reasons, I withhold my approval of House Bill 5067, and do hereby veto the same.

Sincerely,

Charlie Crist