

# Florida Legislature Passes Manufacturing Competitiveness Act

April 30, 2013

Today, the Florida Legislature passed the [Manufacturing Competitiveness Act \(HB 357\)](#). The bill, which now heads to Governor Rick Scott for signature, significantly streamlines local and state regulation and approvals, giving manufacturers far more freedom to operate in competitive consumer markets. Its passage is particularly important because Florida is among the bottom five U.S. states in terms of its percentage of gross state product that comes from manufacturing. The sector is a significant job creator with salaries well beyond the state average. Every direct manufacturing job creates about three indirect jobs, more than any employment sector. The legislation authorizes local governments to voluntarily adopt, by ordinance, a Local Manufacturing Development Program that would allow manufacturers to obtain master plan approval for manufacturing sites. The agreed upon master plan would set out limits on the site that would remain applicable over the term of the master plan. Once the master plan is approved, the manufacturer would not need further local approval for future expansions or modifications (except for those involving building code, life, or safety issues). Manufacturers that reside in participating counties will also have access to a coordinated permitting process at the state level for the most common state permits. The bill also enables participating local governments to self-identify as particularly interested in having manufacturing facilities in their jurisdictions. The legislation was advanced by a Carlton Fields team of government attorneys and consultants working on behalf of firm clients, including Associated Industries of Florida, the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers. Carlton Fields shareholder [Martha Chumbler](#), who focused on growth management benefits and overall implementation of the bill said, "This bill can save a company significantly on compliance costs, particularly at the local level. Existing local manufacturers should consider approaching their county governments to adopt the program." Senior government consultant Rheb Harbison, also part of the team, added, "The passage of this bill is significant because it promotes manufacturing growth in the state by creating competition between our counties for the benefits brought by the manufacturing sector." The measure was sponsored by Sen. Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) and Rep. Jim Boyd (R-Bradenton).

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