

Agenda Item: 2.a

Meeting Date: August 5, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: City Commission

Through: Jennifer K. Bramley, City Manager

From: Nicole Delfino

Date: 2025-08-05

Subject: 2025 Post Legislative Update

Presenter(s): Nicole Delfino, Strategy & Sustainability Manager & Laura Boehmer, The Southern Group

Staff Recommendation: Review Legislative Impacts & Implement any Organizational Changes Required by New Laws

Strategic Themes: Good Governance & Environmental Resiliency & Sustainability

Boards & Committees: N/A

Budget Impact: \$50,000 per year for Legislative Lobbyist

Past Action: Review and modifications of prior year Legislative Agendas & post legislative updates.

Next Action: Preparation for 2026 Legislative Session

Attachments: [A. 2025 Legislative Update Dunedin.pdf](#)
[B. 2025 Dunedin Legislative Priorities.pdf](#)
[C. FLC 2025 Legislative Final Report.pdf](#)

Background: In an effort to protect the quality of life for the City of Dunedin residents, the City established Legislative Priorities in February of 2019, producing documentation of our most pressing state and federal legislative priorities. Subsequently, priorities have been updated each year.

In 2024, City staff, with support of the City Commission, engaged Legislative Lobbyist, The Southern Group (TSG) through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Within TSG, our primary legislative lobbyist is Laura Boehmer. The TSG agreement commenced just ahead of the 2024 Legislative session, allowing staff to work with Ms. Boehmer and TSG to advocate for the City of Dunedin.

During the 2024 and 2025 Legislative sessions, TSG facilitated meetings and coordination occurred both in and outside of Tallahassee with City staff, elected officials, and state agencies. In 2024, TSG together with City Staff coordinated submission and provided the required documentation for two state appropriation requests (Fire Training Center Phase II and Gabion Project). While both the requests passed the House and Senate budget legislation, they were each line-item vetoed by Governor DeSantis.

In the 2025 Legislative session, two appropriation requests were submitted through the State Legislature with a request of \$5M for the Marina repairs and renovation and \$850,000 for repair/renovation to damaged portions of the Gabion system due to due to Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

The Marina project request was carried forward by Senator Ed Hooper on the Senate side and Representative Adam Anderson on the House side. Due to this year's challenging legislative environment, the project did not receive the full requested allocation, but was entered into the Senate budget with an initial allocation of \$1M, later amended to a total of \$1.5M due to advocacy by Senator Hooper.

The Gabion project request was also carried forward by Senator Ed Hooper on the Senate side and Representative Kim Berfield on the House side for the full amount of the request at \$850,000.

The total appropriation for both the Marina repairs (\$1.5M) and Gabion repairs (\$850,000) were approved by the House and Senate in the State's budget in late June. The Governor, with line item veto power in the State's budget, did not veto either of the projects and signed the budget into law on June 30, 2025. Advocacy efforts to maintain both appropriations in the budget and to pass the Governor's office was extensive.

Our legislative impact and advocacy continue to grow as we engage and build our relationships with Senator Ed Hooper, Representative Adam Anderson, and Representative Kim Berfield and the larger Pinellas County delegation. Developing concise and direct priorities and requests is key to advocacy. As we look ahead to the 2026 Legislative session, staff will bring forward the City's current legislative position and request Commission discussion and direction on 2026 priorities and amend the Legislative advocacy document.

Staff also encourages connecting with the delegation during off-session season and visiting Tallahassee during the 2026 Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days. Advocacy,

appropriations requests, and grant requests through State agencies are key to advancing the City's priorities. TSG maintains an office and presence in Tallahassee for the duration of the legislative session and pre-session committee hearings. City Staff and TSG will track key bills throughout the legislative session.