

FRSA Notches Major Victories in 2024 Legislative Session

The Florida Legislature adjourned, *sine die*, from its 2024 regular session on Friday, March 8 at 2:25pm. Over the course of 60 days, legislators considered over 2,000 pieces of legislation, with 325 proposals ultimately passing both chambers of the Legislature. Among the bills that passed, FRSA enjoyed remarkable success on several of its top priorities. Let's take a look back at a tremendous 2024 session for the roofing industry.

Green Light for Roof Inspections

Over the last several years, the Legislature has taken landmark steps to shore up the state's ailing residential property insurance market and to enact key consumer protections for insureds. Among the consumer-friendly measures, FRSA was a key supporter of language to ensure that residential property insurance policies could not be cancelled solely for the age of an existing roof exceeding 15 years. Thus, under s. 627.7011, *Florida Statutes*, an insured is afforded an opportunity to have a roof exceeding 15 years of age inspected for a determination of remaining useful life. Unfortunately, roofing contractors were inadvertently omitted from the list of "authorized inspectors" permitted to perform such services. This omission was successfully resolved during the 2024 legislative session. HB 1611 *Insurance* by Rep. Cindi Stevenson (R – St. Augustine) and Sen. Jay Trumbull (R – Panama City) amends state law to include licensed roofing contractors in the list of "authorized inspectors" under s. 627.7011, *Florida Statutes*. The bill passed the Legislature on March 7 and now awaits action from Governor DeSantis.

Keeping Trail Lawyers Out of the Building Code Process

Legislation was filed early in the 2024 session that would have awarded prevailing party attorneys' fees for successful petitioners seeking interpretations from the Florida Building Commission. The bill, HB 481 *Building Construction Regulations and System Warranties* by Rep. Randy Maggard (R – Zephyrhills) and Sen. Ed Hooper (R – Clearwater), was well-intentioned but the idea of prevailing party attorney's fees as an attraction to draw trial attorneys into the building code interpretation process was of great concern to the construction industry. FRSA engaged with industry sponsors, including the Florida

Homebuilders Association (FHBA) and the Associated Builders and Contractors of Florida (ABC) and the bill sponsors to have the attorney fee language struck. HB 481 ultimately passed the Legislature on March 4. It awaits further action from Governor DeSantis.

It's Tool Time! (Again)

FRSA was a key contributor to efforts in 2022 to establish a state sales tax holiday recognizing Florida's skilled workforce and students seeking a career in building construction and the trades. That year, the "Tool Time" Sales Tax Holiday was created in partnership with Rep. Bobby Payne (R – Palatka) who chose the week of Labor Day as a time for sales tax free shopping on key items such as hand tools, power tools, work attire, safety equipment and related products. Tool Time was renewed in 2023 by the Legislature as part of the largest tax cut package in the state's history. This year, despite fewer dollars for tax cuts, the Legislature again renewed the Tool Time Sales Tax Holiday for 2024 under the direction of Rep. Stan McClain (R – Ocala) and Sen. Blaise Ingoglia (R – Spring Hill). For the third year in a row, the sales tax holiday will be enjoyed during the week of Labor Day. Tool Time saves Florida taxpayers nearly \$20 million per year and ceremonially recognizes the ongoing accomplishments of our skilled workers. The tax package, HB 7073 *Taxation*, passed the Legislature on March 8 and awaits signature from Governor DeSantis.



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