

THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE  
*Sunset Review*  
OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS  
& GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY



June 2007

Report No. SO7-12

**Key Legislative Contacts**

**Gary VanLandingham**  
Director  
850-487-0578

**Tom Roth**  
Staff Director  
Economic Development,  
Environment, and  
Transportation  
850-488-1024

**Florida Government  
Accountability Act  
Sunset Reviews**

The act establishes the process, criteria, and schedule for the Legislature to assess whether state agencies and advisory committees need to continue to exist.

The following agencies are on the first year schedule for Sunset Reviews to be conducted by July 1, 2008

- Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Department of Citrus, including the Citrus Commission
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
- Water Management Districts

**OPPAGA**  
111 West Madison Street  
Suite 312  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
Phone: 850-488-0021  
Fax: 850-487-3804

[www.oppaga.state.fl.us](http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us)

## OPPAGA Reports on Multi-Agencies - 2000-2007

### 2007

*State Agencies Have Increased Their Use of Other Personal Services Employees*, Report No. 07-28, April 2007  
In Fiscal Year 2005-06, the state hired 20,255 OPS employees, which represented a 7% increase from the previous year. Expenditures for these employees also have increased in recent years, with agencies spending \$194.3 million on OPS employee salaries in Fiscal Year 2005-06.

Agencies hire OPS employees for many reasons, including the need to fulfill peak workload demands. Agencies hire such employees for a wide range of occupations, including office clerks and service workers. Agencies report that they want to retain OPS employees because of the importance of their work and because it would not be cost-effective to replace them, given their expertise.

### 2006

*Florida's System for Handling Consumer Complaints Could Be Improved*, Report No. 06-51, June 2006. Most state agencies receive consumer complaints and have developed generally consistent mechanisms to help consumers resolve these complaints. In addition, two agencies—the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Office of the Attorney General—have a broader role, handling complaints against entities not regulated by the state, violations of

economic crimes. However, comprehensive, enterprise-wide information about the consumer complaint services provided by agencies is not centrally collected and reported to policymakers.

Florida law requires agencies to coordinate with each other through a statutorily mandated referral process, to ensure that state government is responsive to consumers. Although they do engage in some informal coordination, agencies often do not implement all provisions of the consumer services laws.

The state's consumer complaint resolution process could be improved by increasing communication among agencies, providing the Legislature more comprehensive information about agencies' complaint-related activities, and reducing duplication.

### 2005

*Legislature Should Consider Uniform Process to Determine Appropriate Regulatory Program Funding Levels*, Report No. 05-57, December 2005. Currently, there is no overall legislative policy governing how regulatory programs should be funded. As a result, Florida's 190 regulatory programs vary widely with regard to self-sufficiency requirements, funding sources, and types of user fees. Only 81 of these programs are required to be self-supporting, and the state subsidizes others with at least

Government in the Sunshine Laws, and

\$29 million in general revenue. Total state support cannot reliably be determined because many agencies do not allocate indirect costs to their programs.

If the Legislature wishes to establish a uniform policy governing regulatory program funding, we recommend that it consider

- eliminating statutory caps on regulatory fee amounts;
- revising legislative budget request instructions to require agencies to provide written justification when requesting general revenue for a regulatory program;
- revising legislative budget request instructions to establish a uniform methodology for calculating regulatory program costs; and
- requiring agencies to establish rules regarding the mix of user charges needed to meet the funding requirements for each regulatory program.

## 2004

*Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System Nears Full Statewide Implementation; Additional State Funds Will Be Necessary*, Report No. 04-64, August 2004. The Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) provides state law enforcement agencies with a communications system that uses a single series of frequencies, thereby allowing inter-agency communication. In 2000, the state negotiated a contract with M/A-Com to exchange its radio tower assets for \$25.5 million in radio equipment credits. When the Joint Task Force began to allocate credits to agencies, it distributed credits to both sworn and non-sworn officers; however, five agencies were short 185 radios for sworn officers. Since 2002, the Joint Task Force has allocated credits to better meet the needs of most sworn officers but is still short 335 radios due to an increased need by the Department of Corrections. While the initial set of radios has been purchased using radio credits and agency funds, the state will need to spend \$5.6 million over the next six years to fund maintenance costs.

The Joint Dispatch System is composed of regional dispatch centers handling incoming calls for most agencies using the SLERS system. Prior to 2002, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission operated its own network of dispatch centers at an annual cost of \$3.4 million. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has consolidated three dispatch centers with the Joint Dispatch centers attaining significant cost savings of over \$600,000.

## 2002

*An Altered Credit Allocation and a Combined Dispatch System Would Better Support State Law Enforcement Radio System*, Report No. 02-71, December 2002. The Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System provides state law enforcement agencies with a communications system that uses a single series of radio frequencies. The system improves inter-agency communication and is scheduled to be fully implemented by 2004.

To purchase radio equipment for the system, the state exchanged its radio tower assets for a \$25.5 million equipment credit from the system vendor. The Joint Task Force allocated radio credits to agencies to equip both sworn and non-sworn employees. As a result, agencies were able to purchase all but 185 radios needed for sworn law enforcement officers.

The Joint Dispatch System is a separate but related initiative consisting of regional dispatch centers that handle incoming calls for most agencies using the statewide system. However, the Fish and Wildlife Commission operates its own network of six dispatch centers at an annual cost of \$3.4 million. Consolidating the commission's dispatch services with joint dispatch would make more efficient use of state radio resources.

*Improved State Vehicle Management Could Save Florida Up to \$2.4 Million Annually*, Report No. 02-31, May 2002. There are over 5,000 state vehicles assigned to state employees. During Fiscal Year 1999-00, 65% were driven the minimum 10,000 miles to justify continued assignment. However, the state could continue improving fleet management by assigning vehicles more rationally and by restricting commuting.

- Because agency heads may waive the minimum mileage requirement, some state vehicles are driven substantially less than 10,000 miles per year. The state lacks an adequate policy defining criteria for agency head waivers.
- Of assigned vehicles used for commuting, 395 or 26% were used primarily for transporting employees to and from work. The Legislature should develop a policy restricting commuting in state vehicles. Requiring employees to reimburse the state for commuting in state vehicles would generate from \$39,300 to \$2.1 million per year.
- Agencies reimburse many other employees for personal vehicle mileage in excess of the amount needed to acquire, operate, and maintain a state vehicle. The state could save \$313,000 annually by financing the purchase of vehicles for most of these employees, with additional money received when the state disposes of these vehicles.



# *The Florida Legislature*

## *Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability*



### **Where does OPPAGA get its work?**

- Presiding officers
- Legislation or Proviso in the General Appropriations Act
- Legislative Auditing Committee
- Member requests approved by presiding officers

### **What does OPPAGA provide?**

- **Research memoranda** answer specific issues or questions for leadership, members, or committees; these papers provide a non-public forum to fine-tune ideas as they are confidential to the requesting member and his or her presiding officer. In Fiscal Year 2005-06 OPPAGA issued 100 research assistance memoranda.
- **Reports** deliver program evaluation, policy analysis, and justification reviews of state programs to assist members with overseeing government operations and developing policy choices. Progress reports inform the Legislature whether agencies have corrected identified problems. In Fiscal Year 2005-06, OPPAGA issued 77 reports and made 53 presentations to legislative committees on these reports.
- **Florida Government Accountability Report (FGAR)** offers descriptive, evaluative, and performance information about more than 200 state programs. This nationally unique, award-winning encyclopedia of state government is available on-line and in print for all members' capitol and district offices.
- **The Florida Monitor Weekly** provides summaries and links to new reports and articles of interest to Florida policy makers through a weekly electronic newsletter.