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## Collier seeking changes to growth management law

By **LARRY HANNAN**, Daily News staff  
October 3, 2005

Collier commissioners don't want Florida government telling them how to run their growth management program.

The commissioners today reminded their local legislative delegation of that fact at a legislative session workshop to discuss priorities for the 2006 legislative session in Tallahassee. Commissioners worry that growth management legislation that became law earlier this year will make it more difficult for local governments to enact their own programs that control or manage growth.

The county has a strict system that requires capacity exist before growth can occur. The county also relies on impact fees to make capacity improvements.

If the new legislation weakens Collier's system or costs them impact fee money, Collier County would be seriously hurt, commissioners said.

State legislation doesn't say whether counties can enact rules to manage growth that are more strict than what the state requires.

State legislators believe counties can enact tougher regulations, but Collier Commission Chairman Fred Coyle doesn't like the ambiguity of the law. He wants the legislature to amend the law so it specifically allows for tougher regulations.

Coyle has been a vocal critic of the growth management legislation.

Rep. Mike Davis, R-Naples, agreed with county officials and said he would push for changes to the legislation that specifically state that counties can enact rules that are stricter than what the state requires.

"We will try to add language (in 2006) that allows local government to make regulations tougher than what the state says," Davis said. "I believe that's already implied (in the legislation) but we want to spell it out."

Upon signing the bill in May, Gov. Jeb Bush called the growth management bill "historic legislation," and referred to it as the most meaningful legislation in the field of growth management since the inception of the law in 1985.

Commissioners also told state legislators they want to be allowed to index local option gas taxes and get state assistance to generate more affordable housing.

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