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CONTACT: Betsy Collins | (850) 487-5065 | collins.betsy.s13@flsenate.gov

Beach Management Legislation by Senator Dennis L. Jones Makes a Final Stop in the House

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- On Tuesday, Feb. 28, House Bill 691, which had unanimously passed the House the previous week, was taken up by the Senate and again passed unanimously with a single amendment and the co-sponsorship of every Senator present. That amendment renamed Chapter 161, making this law the Dennis L. Jones Beach and Shore Preservation Act.

The Senate bill was brought up at the close of Senator Jones' (R – Seminole) farewell to his colleagues. This unexpected tribute was orchestrated by the Senate President with the retitling amendment offered by Senator Jack Latvala. The Senate was recognizing that Senator Jones was not only the Dean of the Legislature, but over his 32 years in the House and Senate, he has been the primary architect and champion of Florida's successful beach management program.

The recognition continued on Wednesday, March 7, when the Beach Management Bill returned briefly to the House, where its sponsor, Representative Jim Frishe (R – St. Petersburg), with Senator Jones at his side, asked the House to agree with the Senate's name change. The Beach Management Bill passed unanimously before being sent to the Governor.

This bill streamlines the permitting process and improves the cost-effectiveness of projects to repair Florida's eroding beaches. Both sponsors stressed that Florida's beaches are the primary economic engine that drives the state's tourism economy as demonstrated in 2010, when Florida's beach tourism had a direct and indirect spending impact of \$22.7 billion.

"One issue that I would like to be remembered for in my time in the Legislature was the passage of the Beach Management Act in 1998. Today, this piece of legislation is made more significant because the House sponsor is my good friend, Representative Jim Frishe," stated Senator Jones after the vote.