



# PRESS RELEASE

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## AIF Rallies Business and Industry Group Support for Destination Resorts Legislation

**TALLAHASSEE** – At a press conference held in the Florida Capitol, Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) today rallied support for destination resorts from statewide business groups, construction industry associations, unions and small business owners. Several new organizations added their names to the growing list of those in favor of building and operating up to three destination resorts in South Florida. Each participant touted the impact passage of the Destination Resorts Act would have on their industry sector and business, including the creation of desperately needed jobs and increased economic opportunities.

Joining AIF were the Associated Builders and Contractors, Florida Carpenters Regional Council, Florida Concrete & Products Association Florida United Businesses Association and Latin Builders Association. Owners and representatives of South Florida small businesses came together with the statewide groups to encourage the Florida Legislature to pass destination resorts legislation.

“Destination resorts are a major part of Florida’s solution for creating high-quality jobs and getting our economy moving again,” said Brewster Bevis, AIF Vice-President of External Relations. “This proposal is something the Legislature can do right now to improve Floridians’ personal opportunity, but it will also have a long-term positive impact on Florida’s economic health for decades to come.”

Passage of destination resorts legislation, HB 487 and SB 710, would bring:

- A minimum \$6 billion capital investment (\$2 billion each)
- Job creation
  - Approximately 50,000 construction jobs
  - 40,000 to 50,000 permanent direct jobs
  - 80,000 to 100,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs
- Millions more in hotel industry revenues
- Significant increase in sales for taxi services, retail businesses, restaurants, night clubs and others
- A minimum of \$100 million in new property taxes, which can be bonded for infrastructure
- Millions of annual visitors from outside Florida who will add billions in new revenue to our state’s economy

Last month, AIF announced its intent to aggressively lobby for destination resorts legislation and launched its “More Jobs for Florida” campaign, which includes a website, [www.FloridaGetsToWork.com](http://www.FloridaGetsToWork.com), Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/FloridaGetsToWork](http://www.facebook.com/FloridaGetsToWork)) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/FLGetsToWork) (@FLGetsToWork) account. Over the weekend, the statewide business group expanded the campaign to include television advertising. To view the television spots, visit <http://bit.ly/FloridaGetsToWork1> and <http://bit.ly/FloridaGetsToWork2>.

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“The Destination Resorts Act is the only way that Florida can take the gaming structure we currently have, reform it, limit it, add strong regulation and, most importantly, add 100,000 new jobs,” said Bevis. “We believe this is one of most important pieces of legislation that Florida has seen in decades, and we know it won’t be an easy process to get this legislation passed. But, we also know it is not easy right now for the one million Floridians who are out of work. This job market is tough. It’s one of the worst we’ve seen in recent history. There simply aren’t enough jobs out there. Our focus as a state has to be on creating jobs now for the Floridians who need them. The time for this Legislature to act is now.”

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*For more information, visit [www.FloridaGetsToWork.com](http://www.FloridaGetsToWork.com). Additional statements of support from other Florida organizations can be found below.*

## **Statements in Support of Destination Resorts Legislation**

### ***Richard Watson, Legislative Counsel, Associated Builders and Contractors of Florida***

“The creation of destination resorts creates an economic opportunity we cannot discount. As our state economy continues to rely on tourism, sales tax and development revenues, we see the Destination Resorts Act as the catalyst to reinvigorating all three sectors. Twenty percent of the commercial construction industry is unemployed in Florida and our industry continues to lead in jobs losses month after month. Local circumstances command employment growth in the construction industry. The building of destination resorts can create such tremendous local economic stimulus, that the whole state will benefit. If passed, this project has the potential to be one of the biggest job creators this state has ever seen and it is why the Associated Builders and Contractors is standing in support today.”

### ***Michael Murtha, President, Florida Concrete & Products Association***

“The concrete and products industry is always the first to feel the pain of a down economy when new construction projects aren’t initiated. We’re also the hardest hit. Nearly half of all the jobs in Florida’s concrete and products industry have been lost as a result of the current recession. We have got to get Florida’s economy moving and the quickest way to do that is through a vibrant construction industry. More construction jobs in the pipeline mean more sales and more jobs for those who supply construction materials. The creation of three destination resorts will be the boost our industry needs now. Let’s not wait another year. This is the moment for Florida to seize this opportunity. Pass the Destination Resorts Act.”

### ***Bob Burlison, President, Florida Transportation Builders’ Association***

“For more than 75 years, the Florida Transportation Builder’s Association has been Florida’s voice for the road and bridge building industry in Florida. Realizing the many benefits that destination resorts would bring to our state, FTBA’s board recently voted to support of the Destination Resorts Act. Florida will see increased state and local government revenues that will certainly stimulate infrastructure projects and help get Floridians back to work. For every billion invested by state governments on highway construction and improvements, more than 28,000 jobs are created. The Destination Resorts Act will free up a significant amount of revenue for the state to help improve roads and bridges providing safer, smoother avenues for those traveling on Florida’s transportation system.”

### ***Lance Lozano, Chief Operating Officer, Florida United Businesses Association***

“The Florida United Businesses Association and its thousands of members support the development of three job-creating destination resorts in Florida. Various industries including: construction, hospitality, restaurants, retail, convention and gaming will all benefit and hire new workers. The impact of destination resorts will be substantial in helping lift the state’s unemployment burden, and will play a critical role in helping our state recover from these tough economic times. We believe this legislation will be a major step forward in putting hard-working Floridians back to work.”

### ***Melissa Tapanes Llahues, Executive Director and Legislative Committee Chair, Latin Builders Association***

“After 40 years of advocacy for Florida’s Latin builders, we are still shell-shocked by the damage our nation’s current economic status has wreaked upon our industry. The ultimate construction of world-class destination resorts in Florida is important to our more than 750 member businesses because of the numbers. Three destination resorts will create more than 40,000 construction jobs and nearly 100,000 permanent jobs in Florida in a matter of a few years. Our members have had to lay off hundreds of workers as the work dissipated. We support the Destination Resorts Act for that very reason – we need these jobs.”