

JACKSONVILLE GEARS UP FOR MAJOR CHANGES TO THE FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

Last Friday, Governor Rick Scott signed into law two important bills, [SB 606](#) and [HB 579](#).

SB 606 is also known as the Northeast Florida Regional Transportation Commission Act. This legislation will create a nine-member Regional Transportation Committee (RTC). The committee will consist of elected officials covering a six-county area that includes Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties.

“The establishment of a Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) represents the most significant step forward in the advancement of regional transportation in Northeast Florida. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) has been a strong advocate and partner in the effort to establish the RTC and is positioned to help ensure its success,” said Edward E. Burr, chairman of JTA.”

“I commend JTA Board member Ava Parker, the committee and all staff members who assisted in the two-year regional study that helped us achieve this milestone,” Burr continued.

The RTC has been tasked to develop a *Multimodal Regional Transportation Plan* for Northeastern Florida. Part of the assigned task is identifying and securing dedicated funding. The group will also seek to advance significant projects by focusing on coordinating regional transportation and creating the organizational framework to implement the plan.

“The JTA is excited about the possibilities that this legislation will bring to Northeast Florida. Seamless transportation does not stop at the county line and success in transportation requires collaboration on a regional scale. It says a lot that our leaders in Northeast Florida are thinking regionally to ensure Northeast Florida remains competitive,” added Nathaniel Ford Sr., CEO of JTA.

Also signed into law was [HB 579](#), the Natural Gas Fuel Bill. This law promotes the use of natural gas used in transportation vehicles. This bill replaces the current alternative fuel decal fee

program as of January 14, 2014. The bill provides a five-year period of no taxes on compressed natural gas and liquefied natural gas used as a transportation fuel. After the five-year period, natural gas will be taxed at \$0.21 per gallon (compared to \$0.31 for diesel).