This week, the first of the 2019 Legislative Session, budget subcommittees were scheduled to meet to begin their work on a balanced budget for next fiscal year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). The subcommittee staff have been reviewing base budgets, the Governor’s budget recommendations, and various technical issues while waiting for their subcommittee allocations. Allocations are the budget limits within which each subcommittee must balance its portion of the budget. There have also been several presentations on water quality and sewage issues. Much of the decision-making will have to wait until the allocations are received.

**Senate**

In the Senate, the appropriations bill will be developed by the Senate Committee on Appropriations. This is a 21 member committee, chaired by Senator Rob Bradley, which includes the chairmen the of 5 budget subcommittees. The FWC budget will be developed in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government, chaired by Senator Debbie Mayfield. There are 10 members on the subcommittee who will be developing the budgets for the following agencies: Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Department of Citrus; Department of Environmental Protection; the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Department of Business and Professional Regulation; Department of Financial Services; Department of Lottery, Department of Management Services; Public Service Commission; and Department of Revenue.

**House**

The House Appropriations Committee will develop the budget bill for the House of Representatives. This is a 30 member committee, chaired by Representative Travis Cummings, which includes the chairmen of the 7 budget subcommittees. FWC’s portion will be decided in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Representative Holly Raschein. There are 12 members on the subcommittee who will be developing the budgets for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Citrus, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
Next Steps
Senate and House budget subcommittees and full committees plan to work intensively this month toward the goal of passing their respective Appropriations Acts. If all goes well, they will hold their budget conference meetings sometime in late April or early May to reconcile the differences between the respective House and Senate budgets, in time to pass the final budget before the end of Session on May 3rd. After the Governor completes his line item veto list, the State will then have its beginning budget for Fiscal Year 2019/20.