

## CHAPTER 2026-226

### Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 4105

An act relating to the Port St. Joe Port Authority, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, and Liberty Counties; amending chapter 2000-488, Laws of Florida; expanding the Port St. Joe Port Authority to include Franklin, Gadsden, and Liberty Counties; revising membership of the governing body of the authority; providing for the selection of a chair of the governing body; providing for transition; providing for staggered terms; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 and subsection (12) of section 8 of section 3 of chapter 2000-488, Laws of Florida, are amended to read:

Section 1. Creation; boundaries.—There is hereby created a body corporate to be known as the Port St. Joe Port Authority with the corporate powers to sue and be sued and with the additional powers specified herein. Said authority shall be a public agency for the development of commerce and the port of Port St. Joe. The boundaries of the Port St. Joe Port Authority shall embrace and include all of Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, and Liberty Counties.

Section 2. Governing Body.—

(1) The Port St. Joe Port Authority shall consist of ~~six (6) five~~ five commissioners who shall constitute said authority. The said ~~six (6) five~~ five members shall be appointed by the Governor, with one (1) member who is a resident of the City of Port St. Joe to serve as chair of the authority, two (2) members who are residents of Gulf County, and one (1) member from each of Franklin, Gadsden, and Liberty Counties who shall be a resident of the respective county. ~~from the date this act becomes a law, the first appointments shall be three (3) for four (4) years and two (2) for two (2) years. Thereafter All appointments shall be for a term of four (4) years from the expiration of the previous term and all vacancies shall be filled by the Governor for the unexpired term. No commissioner shall be an officer or employee of the City of Port St. Joe, Franklin County, Gadsden County, Florida, the County of Gulf County, Liberty County, or the State of Florida, excepting members of the militia or notaries public. No more than two (2) of the commissioners shall be persons who are primarily engaged in the maritime business, and no person shall be eligible for appointment as commissioner except freeholders of the City of Port St. Joe or Gulf County, Florida. The commissioners constituting the Port St. Joe Port Authority shall select one (1) of their members as chair and the term of office of the chair shall be two (2) years from the date of his or her selection. The commissioners shall receive no compensation for their services but the authority is hereby allowed travel and other expenses which shall be paid as~~

other expenses. Three (3) commissioners shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business, exercising its powers, and for all other purposes.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, the offices and terms of all members of the authority as of the effective date of this act shall end as of the effective date of this act, but such members may continue to serve until a successor in office is appointed by the Governor. In order to provide for staggered terms, one (1) member who is a resident of Gulf County and one (1) member who is a resident of Gadsden County initially appointed to the authority after the effective date of this act shall serve two (2) year terms.

Section 3. Employees.—The Port St. Joe Port Authority is hereby empowered to employ an executive director of the authority whose compensation shall be fixed by resolution of the commissioners of said authority. And the said authority is empowered to employ its own counsel, secretary, technical experts, and such other employees, permanent and temporary, as it may require, and it is empowered to determine the qualifications, duties, and compensation of such employees. None of the said employees shall be covered by any local civil service laws now or hereafter in effect with respect to employees of the City of Port St. Joe or Franklin County, Gadsden County, Gulf County, or Liberty County.

Section 4. Powers.—The Port St. Joe Port Authority, as hereby created, is hereby authorized and empowered:

(1) To own and acquire property or facilities by purchase, lease, easement, eminent domain, gift, or transfer from the City of Port St. Joe or from Franklin County, Gadsden County, Gulf County, or Liberty County, the United States of America, the State of Florida, any agencies thereof, corporations, or individuals,

(2) To acquire, construct, maintain, and operate: port terminal facilities; warehouses; wharves; docks; drydocks; quays; yacht basins; bridges; ship basins; breakwaters; foundation for shipways; fitting out docks; shipyards; marine railways; railroads; repair shops; loading and unloading, packaging and refrigeration facilities; and all other harbor, port, commercial, and industrial improvements and facilities,

(3) To enter into contracts or leases with individuals, corporations, any municipality, the State of Florida, and the United States of America, or any other public body to operate facilities owned or leased by said port authority,

(4) To enter into contracts for furthering the business, operation, and maintenance of shipping facilities and harbor and port improvements within the boundaries of the authority Gulf County.

Section 6. Limitation of Powers.—The Port St. Joe Port Authority, as hereby created, shall have no power or authority to bind or commit the City of Port St. Joe, a municipal corporation, or Franklin County, Gadsden

County, Gulf County, or Liberty County, in any manner, directly or indirectly; and the said City of Port St. Joe or Franklin County, Gadsden County, Gulf County, or Liberty County shall not be liable or responsible in any manner for any of the debts, liabilities, obligations, acts, or omissions of the Port St. Joe Port Authority or any of its officers or employees. All persons dealing with the said authority are hereby charged with full notice of this limitation and its powers.

Section 7. Appropriations from local governments ~~City of Port St. Joe and Gulf County.~~—The City of Port St. Joe, as well as Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, and Liberty Counties, ~~and also Gulf County~~ are empowered to appropriate and contribute to the Port St. Joe Port Authority such sums of money for the operation expenses of the said authority as the commission of the said city and the county commission may from year to year determine through the city's and county's budgets. Such sums of money as are so appropriated and contributed by the City of Port St. Joe and the aforementioned counties ~~Gulf County~~ shall be paid to the Port St. Joe Port Authority upon its requisition signed by the chair and any two (2) other members thereof. The County Commission of Gulf County may pledge the second gas tax or may levy a millage and the City of Port St. Joe may levy a millage to finance said Port St. Joe Port Authority.

Section 8. Minimum Charter Requirements.—

(12) The District's geographic boundary limitations shall consist of all of Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, and Liberty Counties ~~be the same as those of Gulf County.~~

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 30, 2026.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 30, 2026.