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Design Professional Liability and Property Insurance Bills Vetoed by Governor Crist

Concern for Florida's Consumers Important in Decision to Veto SB 2044 (Property Insurance) and SB 1964 (Design Professional Liability).

Governor Crist vetoed SB 2044, despite support from the Florida Insurance Commissioner and other industry representatives. The Governor expressed his concerns that increases in insurance premiums and changes to mitigation discounts would be especially hard on Florida's consumers during "these very difficult economic times".

Consumer protection was likewise a major factor with respect to the veto of SB 1964. Governor Crist agreed with critics of the bill who argued design professionals are not entitled to avoid liability, effectively "removing a consumer's right to bring a tort action against them for economic damages caused by their negligence". Shifting the burden of economic loss to consumers without sufficient alternative remedies was not acceptable to the Governor.

On the other hand, HB 965, relating to real property assessments, received the Governor's approval. Owners of properties affected by Chinese drywall may be entitled to a downward adjustment of the assessed value of the property for tax purposes. Contact your local Property Appraiser to request re-valuation - you may be entitled to a significant discount.

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