

Is Enterprise Florida Headed to Junkyard?

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BY JIM TURNER
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Senate President Kathleen Passidomo lent support last week to the latest House effort to close the doors of the business-recruitment agency Enterprise Florida.

The Naples Republican said aspects of Enterprise Florida could be folded into the Department of Economic Opportunity, such as trade missions, but that the public-private agency overall “just doesn’t seem to be as effective as we would like.”

“I think we could create, you know, a continuous state partnership with the business communities through DEO (the Department of Economic Opportunity), and I think moving the staff, the people who work for EFI (Enterprise Florida) to DEO might be a good way to do it,” Sen. Passidomo told reporters.”

A House bill proposes shifting funding and programs from Enterprise Florida, such as the Florida Sports Foundation, to the Department of Economic Opportunity. The proposal comes after House leaders in past years have targeted economic-development programs.

House Speaker Paul Renner of Palm Coast told reporters earlier that people and businesses have come to the state without needing incentives from Enterprise Florida. He said \$13 million provided this year to the agency could be better used in other ways.

“The idea that it has delivered on its promises I think, in my opinion, is just not the case,” Rep. Renner said. “Do we really need a separate board, with people who are there, or can we more streamline what we’re doing and really not waste taxpayer dollars?”

Rep. Renner used part of his session-opening speech March 7 to call for eliminating Enterprise Florida. Since then, the agency has highlighted its work to bring new jobs to Miami and to attract more economic activity from Brazil.