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EDITORIAL: County was right to delay decision on impact fees

Lee County commissioners acted properly to delay slashing or eliminating impact fees this week, in spite of pressure from builders to do the contrary.

The county should study the effects of what reducing fees would do to local projects, such as building roads. Thankfully they did, by agreeing to speed up an analysis of road impact fees.

Impact fees are one-time fees on new construction collected to help pay for roads, parks, emergency services and libraries.

They were down 74 percent in the 2007 fiscal year from 2006. Permits issued for building single-family homes took a dive, to 2,248 in 2007 from 6,994 in 2006.

Impact fee costs have increased exponentially over the years, and road impact fees are \$9,065 for a single-family home and \$15,995 for every 1,000 square feet of retail.

We support efforts to help jump-start the economy but believe in this particular case that we need to get the full picture on impact fees before drastic action is taken.

The Lee Building Industry Association says that builders won't pull permits until there's a change, but that seems counterproductive to them, prospective employees, consumers and the community.
