



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM #VIII.B

DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2019
TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS
FROM: STAFF
SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENCE AND ARTICLES

Recommendation

Information only.



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Broward County plans legal action to stop Everglades oil drilling

David Fleshler February 12, 2019

Broward County's chief attorney said Tuesday the county will take legal action to halt a plan to drill for oil in the Everglades, as two members of Congress issued statements denouncing the project.

Broward County Attorney Andrew Meyers told the County Commission his office would work with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on the next legal steps against the drilling plan, which has generated strong opposition as a threat to South Florida's famous wetlands.

Kanter Real Estate LLC, which owns 20,000 acres in the Everglades, won a key legal fight last week when a state appeals court ordered the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to issue the company a drilling permit for a site west of Miramar. As news spread of the company's victory, the plan has been denounced by environmentalists and local, state and federal officials.

"There is no place for oil drills in the Everglades," Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-West Delray, said in a statement issued Tuesday. "Drilling in the River of Grass is a huge setback for Everglades restoration, and an oil spill there would not only devastate this national treasure, but also the surrounding communities. This should be immediately appealed and overturned."

Meyers said the next legal step has not yet been determined. Options include requests for additional review by the appeals court or an appeal to the Florida Supreme Court, he said.

If the company wins in court again, the county could still fight the project when the company applies for various permits and licenses. For example, the company would need the county to issue a land-use change for the site, which is currently classified as conservation land.

Meyers cautioned commissioners against saying anything about the permits.

"This matter could very well come before the county, including this board, for certain decisions," he said. "It might involve land use, it might involve zoning, it may involve other permits. And for reasons we could discuss individually, it's advantageous to the county to try to limit our comments on that at this point."

No one from Kanter spoke at the meeting. John Kanter, the company's president, declined comment by email.

The oil drilling item had been placed on the County Commission agenda by Commissioner Beam Furr. After the Tuesday meeting, he said he was satisfied with what the county was doing to stop a project that his constituents strongly opposed.

"They want us to fight it," he said. "I've heard that loud and clear."