



(DRAFT) RESOLUTION TCSF #20-02

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA AND TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS REPRESENTING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF MONROE, MIAMI-DADE, BROWARD, PALM BEACH, MARTIN, ST. LUCIE, AND INDIAN RIVER COUNTIES, FLORIDA; SUPPORTING LEGISLATION THAT WILL QUANTIFY AND ADDRESS THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED DEFICIT IN FUNDING NEEDED FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TO ACCOMMODATE FLORIDA'S GROWING POPULATION AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

WHEREAS, the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils' seven county geographical area is comprised of Broward, Indian River, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie counties and 122 municipalities, which contain over 6.7 million residents or nearly one-third of the State's population, responsible for generating over one-third of the State's gross domestic product; and

WHEREAS, the Councils are multi-purpose regional governmental entities with policy responsibility in the areas of affordable housing, economic development, emergency preparedness, energy, regional health, natural resources, urban planning, and regional transportation; and

WHEREAS, water is Florida's most important resource, responsible for the natural environments that define our state identity, sustain our quality of life, and support our economy; and

WHEREAS, the water infrastructure systems in the state are significant assets that protect public health and the state's water resources, and which are integral to the economic vitality and growth of the state; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Legislature passed and the Governor signed Senate Bill 444, visionary legislation which provided a dedicated revenue source for water protection and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, despite the significant funding called for in this landmark piece of legislation, funding for the program was largely eliminated due to the economic downturn in 2007 and 2008; and

WHEREAS, in 2020 the Legislature passed and the Governor signed Senate Bill 712, the Clean Waterways Act, which enacted many of the recommendations of the Governor’s Blue Green Algae Task Force, including addressing septic tanks, agricultural best management practices, stormwater treatment, water quality monitoring, biosolids regulations, domestic wastewater collection and treatment, and the bottled water industry; and

WHEREAS, the economic recovery has led to the State budget increasing by over \$26.78 billion over the past 16 years; and

WHEREAS, over the same 16 year period the average state investment, as a percentage of the total state budget, has been only 0.66% for water infrastructure (including urban, natural and agricultural water supply, wastewater management, flood control, water quality protection, and natural system restoration); and

WHEREAS, by comparison, the average state investment for transportation infrastructure has been 11% of the State budget over the same time period; and

WHEREAS, the unprecedented blue-green algae, red tide, and hurricane events of 2018 and 2019 led Governor DeSantis to take bold first steps towards addressing the state’s water resource protection and development needs; and

WHEREAS, in the 2020 Edition of the Land and Water Annual Assessment Report, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research documented that Florida will require more than \$66 Billion dollars over the next 20 years to safeguard and responsibly develop Florida’s water resources; and

WHEREAS, the same report found that “a gap exists in every future year, growing to \$577.23 million by the end of the ten-year forecast period, not including adjustments for new or expanding initiatives;” and

WHEREAS, the protection and restoration of our aquifers, coral reefs, lagoons, springs, and other natural water bodies is a shared priority of federal, state, and local governments and regional bodies; and

WHEREAS, municipal and county utilities face anticipated expenditures to repair and replace aging infrastructure, comply with new Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Act mandates, as well as facing new responsibilities and costs relating to water security, source water protection, and additional needs for re-use of treated effluent; and

WHEREAS, municipal and county resources dedicated to water and wastewater infrastructure are being increasingly consumed by compliance with complex new mandates such as numeric nutrient criteria and testing requirements and are, therefore, unavailable for critical maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation needs without substantial increases in local water and wastewater fees; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a new water and wastewater infrastructure funding program would not only help to protect and restore our aquifer, coral reefs, lagoons, springs, and other natural water bodies but also provide much-needed assistance to local governments and promote good paying jobs in the construction and maintenance of this infrastructure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SOUTH FLORIDA AND TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS THAT:

The Councils request the Florida Legislature to enact legislation which requires:

1. The identification and evaluation of funding sources sufficient to address the shortfall projected by the Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research necessary to protect and enhance Florida's water resources, address water resource and water supply development, provide adequate flood protection, address wastewater management, and provide water quality protection and development which includes the repair of impaired waters and the restoration of natural water bodies; and
2. The identification and evaluation of funding alternatives should include those that are currently available to the State as well as other funding mechanisms and models being used by other states and by authorities outside the United States to address short-term and long-term water infrastructure needs; and
3. The estimation of the economic impact of failures and growth constraints which will occur as a result of inaction in resolving the identified shortfall in funding.

DULY ADOPTED by the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils this 16th day of October, 2020.

Daniella Levine Cava
Chair, SFRPC

Michael Houston
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