



MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members

AGENDA ITEM 10.

From: Staff

Date: March 11, 2022

Subject: Coral Reef Conservation Strategy Joint Letter

Background

At the October 16, 2020 Joint Meeting, the Councils unanimously adopted Joint Resolution TCSF # 20-01, related to Florida's Coral Reef. The Resolution expressed support for renaming the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area in honor of Representative Kristin Jacobs; passage of the Federal Restoring Resilient Reefs Act (Rubio/Soto); and dedicated resources for Florida's Coral Reef. Additionally, the Councils urged the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) to work collaboratively to develop and implement as soon as possible a long-term coral reef conservation strategy for Florida's Coral Reef, including the renamed Kristin Jacobs Southeast Florida Coral Reef Conservation Area, before adverse impacts to the reef cannot be reversed.

Analysis

Subsequent to the meeting, the Councils transmitted the Joint Resolution to Mr. Noah Valenstein, Secretary of the FDEP, and Director Eric Sutton, Executive Director, FWCC. In the transmittal letter the Councils requested that the FDEP and FWCC "elevate as a top priority the creation of this strategy during the upcoming year and beyond" noting that their leadership in this area is critically needed.

In the attached letter, the Councils restate their support for the creation of a joint FDEP/FWCC long-term coral reef conservation strategy for Florida's Coral Reef and request an update on the status of conversation and joint planning on this issue by the two entities.

Recommendation

Approve the Joint Letter and authorize execution by the Council and Working Group chairs.

Council Action – March 18, 2022

Attachment: Joint Letter



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Via Email

March 18, 2022

Mr. Shawn Hamilton
Secretary, Florida Department of
Environmental Protection
2600 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2400

Mr. Eric Sutton
Executive Director, Florida Fish and
Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Director Sutton and Secretary Hamilton:

On behalf of the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, thank you for your continuing efforts to safeguard Florida's fragile environmental and conservation resources. As you may know, over the last five years the Councils have worked closely with your staff and public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to further public awareness, restoration, and protection of Florida's Coral Reef spanning the coastline from Monroe to Martin counties.

In December 2020, following the adoption of Joint Resolution # 20-01 related to the Florida's Coral Reef ecosystem, the Councils requested that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission elevate as a top priority the creation of a long-term coral reef conservation strategy for Florida's Coral Reef, including the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area in Southeast Florida. This conservation strategy is needed before adverse impacts to the reef cannot be reversed.

We would greatly appreciate an update on the status of any conversation or joint planning by your organizations with respect to the creation of a long-term coral reef conservation strategy for Florida's Coral Reef. As the lead environmental and conservation agencies in the State of Florida, your leadership in this area is critically needed. The Councils commit to continue to lend our support and assistance to this important effort.

Secretary Shawn Hamilton

Director Eric Sutton

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We respectfully request that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission elevate as a top priority the creation of this strategy during this year and beyond. Please let us know about next steps in this conversation and how we can be of assistance to you.

Thank you in advance for your consideration, time, and assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Senator Steve Geller
Broward County Commissioner
Chair, SFRPC

Cathy Townsend
St. Lucie County Commissioner
Chair, TCRPC

Quentin "Beam" Furr
Broward County Commissioner
Co-Chair, SFRPC / TCRPC
Florida's Coral Reef Working Group

Doug Smith
Martin County Commissioner
Co-Chair, SFRPC / TCRPC
Florida's Coral Reef Working Group

enclosure

cc Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
Commissioner Rodney Barreto, Chair, FWC
Thomas Reinert, Regional Director, FWC South Region
Joanna C. Walczak, Administrator, DEP Coral Protection and Restoration Program
Jason Andreotta, Director, DEP Southeast District
Jamie Monty, Southeast Regional Administrator, DEP Office of Resilience and Coastal
Protection
Jessica McCawley, Director, FWC Division of Marine Fisheries
Isabel Cosio Carballo, SFRPC Executive Director
Thomas Lanahan, TCRPC Executive Director