



MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members AGENDA ITEM 9b.

From: Staff

Date: March 11, 2022

Subject: Joint Resolution TCSF #22-01 Statewide Water Resources Investment Planning

Background

At joint meetings between the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils held in 2018, 2019, 2020, and most recently on November 5, 2021, the Councils have heard about the significant challenges Florida faces in meeting the need for drinking water while also treating our sewage and protecting the environment. The Florida Association of Counties Water and Environmental Sustainability Committee has recently adopted a policy position calling for improved water project planning including a multi-year work plan to address these challenges.

Analysis

One of the significant road blocks to effectively addressing the various water challenges facing Florida is the “Siloed” nature of how water is considered. Regional flood protection and raw water supply is handled by the water management districts; local flood protection by numerous drainage districts of varying size and capability; potable water supply and distribution by local utilities; sewage collection and treatment by local utilities; disposal of sewage treatment byproducts by local utilities, land owners, and others; and protection of the water environment by various state agencies, county departments, parks, the Federal government, local boards, etc.

Each of these agencies and bodies has various and sometimes overlapping funding sources and responsibilities. At the state level, funding and focus are more a function of shifting legislative priorities and local perspectives rather than a coordinated strategic approach, which leads to wild swings in funding and implementation over time. This is inefficient and has led to a growing backlog of needed infrastructure.

The legislative policy adopted by the Florida Association of Counties’ Water and Environmental Sustainability Committee seeks to address this coordination problem by modeling the Florida

Transportation Commission approach for planning, prioritization, stable predictable multi-year capital construction programs, and oversight which effectively delivers transportation improvements and creating a similar structure for the use of State resources on water projects.

Based on these discussions, staff created the attached Resolution expressing support for statutory changes that will lead to coordinated and strategic investment of State funds for water resources using a structure modelled on the Florida Transportation Commission and Florida Transportation Plan. The Resolution is intended to be sent to leaders in the Legislature, the Governor, the Florida Association of Counties, the Florida League of Cities, and the other Regional Planning Councils.

Recommendation

The Councils should approve Resolution TCSF #22-01 supporting improved statewide water resources investment planning.

Council Action – March 18, 2022

Attachment

1. Resolution TCSF #22-01



RESOLUTION TCSF #22-01

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 CREATION OF A STATEWIDE COORDINATED PLANNING AND PRIORITIZATION APPROACH FOR WATER RESOURCE INVESTMENTS MODELLED ON THE FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils' seven county geographical area consists of Broward, Indian River, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie counties and 122 municipalities, which contain over 6.8 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, health, natural resources, urban planning, and regional transportation; and

WHEREAS, the inlets, estuaries, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and aquifers of the Region are identified as Natural Resources of Regional Significance in the Strategic Regional Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, at joint meetings between the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils held in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 the Councils heard about the significant challenges Florida faces in meeting the need for drinking water while also treating our sewage and protecting the environment; and

WHEREAS, a significant roadblock to effectively addressing the water challenges facing Florida is the fractured nature of responsibility for water and the uncoordinated investment of funds to meet our needs; and

WHEREAS, funding at the state level has been subject to shifting legislative priorities and local perspectives rather than a strategic approach, leading to inefficiencies and a growing backlog of needed infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, recognizing this situation, the Water and Environmental Sustainability Committee of the Florida Association of Counties recently proposed modeling state water resource investment on the Florida Transportation Commission and Florida Transportation Plan approach for planning, prioritization, a predictable multi-year capital construction program, and oversight which reliably delivers transportation improvements; and

WHEREAS, coordinated and efficient investment of sufficient state funding for regional systems in concert with local funding of local systems is needed in order to meet water needs and protect water resources and the environment now and into the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL THAT:

Section 1. The above recitals are declared to be true and correct and are hereby made a part of this Resolution.

Section 2. The Councils express their support for statutory changes that will lead to coordinated and strategic investment of state funds for water resources using a structure modelled on the Florida Transportation Commission and Florida Transportation Plan.

Section 3. A copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the Governor, the President of the Florida Senate, the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, the Florida Association of Counties, the Florida League of Cities, and all Regional Planning Councils in Florida.

Section 4. This Resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

DULY ADOPTED by the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils this 18th day of March 2022.

Steve Geller
Chair, SFRPC

Cathy Townsend
Chair, TCRPC