

SFRPC / TCRPC REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
Solid Waste Management in Southeast Florida  
“CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES”

Guest Bios  
October 21, 2022

**WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**



**The Honorable Steve Geller**  
Chair, SFRPC  
Broward County Commissioner, District 5  
Former State Senator



**The Honorable Cathy Townsend**  
Chair, TCRPC  
St. Lucie County Commissioner, District 5

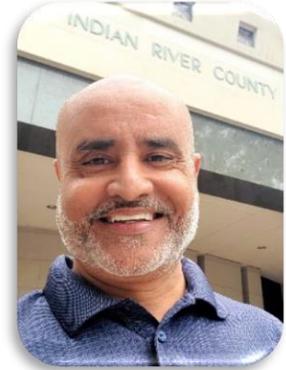
**PANEL MODERATOR**

**Regional Collaboration & Coordination  
A 7-County Expert Panel “Talks Trash”**



**The Honorable Beam Furr**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, SFRPC  
Broward County Commissioner, District 6

**WELCOME AND THANKS TO OUR SPECIAL GUESTS!**



## WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

### SFRPC & TCRPC



**The Honorable Steve Geller, Chair, SFRPC  
Broward County Commissioner, District 5, and Former State Senator**

Senator Steve Geller was the FY2021 Broward County Mayor. He was elected to represent District 5 in 2016. District 5 consists of all or part of Pembroke Pines, Cooper City, Southwest Ranches, Davie, Weston, Plantation and Sunrise. Geller serves as Chairman of the Broward County Water Advisory Board, First Vice-Chairman of the South Florida Regional Planning Council, serves on the Executive Committee of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC), and serves on the Broward County Cultural Council.

Prior to his current service as a Broward County Commissioner, Geller was elected to the Florida Legislature in 1988, at the age of 29. Geller served in the Florida Legislature for 20 years, 9 in the House, and 11 in the Senate. Geller was respected by both Political Parties and was appointed a Committee Chair by both Democratic and Republican Presiding Officers. Geller chaired the Regulated Industries Committee in the House of Representatives, and the Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Community Affairs Committees in the Senate. Geller served two terms as Chair of the Broward County Legislative Delegation, and two terms as Chair of the Hendry County Legislative Delegation. When he retired from the Senate because of Term Limits, Geller was the Minority (Democratic) Leader of the Florida Senate. Geller was also elected as National President of two Different Legislative organizations, the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL), and the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS).

Geller was born in New York, New York, in 1958. He has lived in South Florida since 1965. He attended Florida State University for college and law school, where he was a member of AEPi Fraternity. He has lived in South Broward since his graduation from Florida State University College of Law in 1982. He is married to Laurel Geller, and they have two children, Marc Geller and Ben Geller.



**The Honorable Cathy Townsend, Chair, TCRPC  
St. Lucie County Commissioner, District 5**

A Florida native and St. Lucie County resident for over 30 years. Townsend has been a small business owner in the community. The mother of two sons, Townsend has owned and operated an assisted living facility for 11 years, a bed and breakfast for 10 years. Owned several restaurants. Her background in real estate, in the 90's, helped prepare her for success in small business. She and her husband, James "Bud" King currently own a Flat Land Mowing company.

While Townsend served on the St. Lucie County Planning and Zoning Commission, she was Chair the last two years prior to being elected as a County Commissioner in 2016. Many in the community recognize her name because of her experience as a volunteer and passion for helping promote and build a better community. An avid dancer not only did Townsend teach country line dancing at a variety of adult communities, churches, organizations and educational outlets in St. Lucie County, she also created and produced the successful Dancing With the PALs Annual Celebrity Dance contest to benefit the Fort Pierce Policy Athletic League.

A former student of Indian River Community College. Townsend is also a longtime member of the League of Women Voters of St. Lucie County. She served as the organization's president for twelve years. She has served with the Deaf Service Center of St. Lucie County, the Moose Lodge, the Exchange Club of Ft. Pierce, Elks Club and the Fort Pierce Policy Athletic League.

## PANEL MODERATOR

### Regional Collaboration & Coordination A 7-County Expert Panel “Talks Trash”



**The Honorable Beam Furr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, SFRPC  
Broward County Commissioner, District 6**

Commissioner Beam Furr is the elected Commissioner for Broward County Commission District 6, representing parts of Hollywood, Hallandale Beach, and Pembroke Pines. He also served as Broward County Mayor for the 2018 term.

As an elected official, Commissioner Furr has focused on environmental issues, solid waste, transportation, early childhood education, neighborhood redevelopment, economic opportunity, and the arts.

Since his time as a city commissioner, Commissioner Furr has been committed to finding innovative solutions on the issue of solid waste and recycling. As County Commissioner, he has taken the leading role on this issue and has spent eight years working with municipal partners and experts to develop a long-term plan that will benefit our environment and economy. Commissioner Furr serves as the County representative and Co-Chair of the Broward County Solid Waste Working Group. This Group brings together Broward County government and all municipalities within Broward County to develop a comprehensive solid waste and recycling system for residents. Since 2019, the Solid Waste Working Group has worked diligently to research facility needs, examine governing structures, conduct a waste generation study, and much more.

Commissioner Furr grew up in the areas he represents and works within the community to make our home a better place to live. Prior to serving on the Broward County Commission, he was a Hollywood City Commissioner for 12 years representing District 2. He currently lives in Hollywood with his wife and daughter.

## GUEST PRESENTERS & PANEL MEMBERS



**Samuel Amerson, Utilities and Solid Waste Department Director, Martin County**

Sam graduated from Georgia Southern College with a Bachelor’s Degree in Engineering. From 1982-1991 he worked in the private sector. He then began his career in the public sector with St. Lucie County where he served as a staff engineer, solid waste director and then chief utilities engineer until 1995. From 1995 to 2018, he was the public works director for the City of Stuart and is now the director of the utilities and solid waste department for Martin County.



**Michael Fernandez, Director, Miami-Dade County Department of Solid Waste Management**

Michael J. Fernandez is the Director of the Miami-Dade County Department of Solid Waste Management. He is responsible for the County's integrated waste management system that includes the collection and disposal of solid waste from more than 340,000 households, as well as the disposal needs for over 2.8 million County residents. The department employs more than 1,100 employees and operates with a budget of approximately \$685 million, making it the largest government owned and operated integrated solid waste system in the Southeastern United States and the 19th largest waste firm in the Country. The waste collection operation includes automated curbside garbage and recycling collection; bulky waste collection, litter, and illegal dumping collection services; management and operation of 13 Neighborhood Trash & Recycling Centers. Countywide disposal services include the operation of two Home Chemical Collection Centers for residential drop-off of household hazardous waste, and the management of over 1.8 million tons via three regional transfer stations, three landfills and a 4,000 ton-per-day Waste-to-Energy facility.

Fernandez began his career in the waste industry, over 25 years ago, working at Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI). After about 9 years at BFI, he transitioned into the public sector as the Solid Waste Superintendent for the City of Hallandale Beach. Michael has a proven track record of increasing productivity, efficiency and setting policy in the workplace. Michael's professional experience in the waste industry has made him a valued leader and asset in the industry.



**Allannah Irwin, MS, Environmental Manager – Solid Waste, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southeast District**

Allannah Irwin is an Environmental Manager with the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Southeast District overseeing the Air, Waste, and Underground Injection Control compliance section. She has worked with DEP's Southeast District for a little over five years in the Compliance Assurance Program. Prior to her time with DEP, Allannah worked as a contracted Engineering Technician at the South Florida Water Management District. Allannah received a bachelor's degree in Atmospheric Sciences from Florida International University, a master's degree in Applied Meteorology from Mississippi State University, and graduate certificate in Natural Resource Policy and Administration from University of Florida.



**Stanley Janicki, Chief Revenue Officer, Sedron Technologies**

Joining Sedron Technologies in 2018, Stanley began as a software developer working on the Varcor system before transitioning into a business development role. He raised \$800M in project financing capital for the deployment of the Varcor in the industrial and agricultural sectors. Stanley created a market for Sedron's low carbon and certified Organic nutrients, including long-term offtake contracts with Fortune 500 fertilizer companies enabling the rapid deployment Varcors.

Stanley led the development of \$25M Varcor project in Washington State that processes biosolids (currently operational) and an \$80M Varcor project currently under construction in Indiana that processes dairy waste. Stanley also leads Sedron's media outreach, public relations, and lobbying efforts.

Prior to joining Sedron, Stanley worked as a software engineer for a large server-side software engineering team on Cisco System's Collaboration products, helping bring new features to market. Stanley is currently enrolled in the Executive MBA program at Columbia Business School in New York City.



**Ramana P. Kari, P.E., BCEE, Chief Engineer, Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County**

Ramana Kari, P.E., BCEE is the Chief Engineer of the Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County and has been serving in that capacity since 2013. He has the overall responsibility for the operations of Renewable Energy Facilities No. 1 & 2, the Biosolids Processing Facility, the Recovered Materials Processing Facility, engineering and environmental compliance for all Authority facilities, public affairs, education, and recycling. He is also responsible for the design, permitting, and construction of the Authority's facilities and infrastructure.

Mr. Kari has nearly 30 years of industry experience including 20 years as a consultant with leading civil & environmental engineering firms managing various solid waste management and civil/environmental engineering projects for public and private clients. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Florida and is a Board-Certified Environmental Engineer (Solid Waste specialty). He holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Civil Engineering and an MBA in International Business.

Mr. Kari is an active member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA), Florida Engineering Society (FES) and served on the board of the American Public Works Association (APWA) Gold Coast, Florida Chapter. He also serves on the board of the Hinkley Center for Solid and Hazardous Waste Management.



**Kevin B. Kelleher, Assistant County Administrator, Broward County**

Kevin B. Kelleher has been with the County for more than 30 years and most recently served as Deputy CFO/Deputy Director of the Finance & Administrative Services Department, which in addition to the County's financial services also encompasses technology services and human resources. Kevin B. Kelleher was named Assistant County Administrator for Broward County in September 2020. He began his career with Broward County as a Human Resources Analyst, and subsequently served as Labor Relations Manager, Assistant Director, then Director of the Human Resources Division. He also served as an Assistant County Attorney in the Broward County Attorney's Office, having earned his Juris Doctorate from Nova Southeastern University School of Law. He has lived in Florida for more than 40 years and received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Business Administration from Florida Atlantic University.

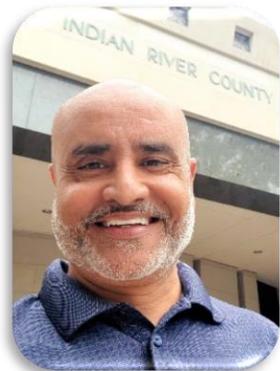
Kelleher's background with the County is rich and varied. He has been involved in various projects, including the financing of the BB&T Center Arena, implementation of the revised Living Wage Ordinance, and a variety of other administrative projects. His career accomplishments include annual negotiations of the County's benefit programs; implementation of a new countywide Human Resources job classification and compensation program; and working with the various labor unions. He is a member of the Florida Bar, the Government Finance Officers Association, Florida Government Finance Officers Association, and various human resources professional associations.



### **Joe Kilsheimer, Executive Director, Florida Waste-to-Energy Coalition**

Joe Kilsheimer owns and operates Kilsheimer & Associates, a consulting practice that advises clients in strategic public relations and public affairs, message development and crisis communications. He represents companies who do business in Florida. He also serves as Executive Director of the Florida Waste-to-Energy Coalition. From 2014 to 2018, Kilsheimer served as the elected mayor of Apopka. While in office, Kilsheimer led the city through a transition from the previous administration, which had held office for 60+ years.

Kilsheimer is a former journalist with more than 20 years of experience. At *The Orlando Sentinel*, he created the Sentinel's technology beat and covered the rise of the Internet as a cultural phenomenon. His bylines appeared in publications ranging from the *Chicago Tribune* to the *Washington Post* to the *Los Angeles Times*.



### **Himanshu Mehta, Managing Director, Utilities and Biosolids Department, Indian River County**

Himanshu H. Mehta, P.E. is the Managing Director for the Indian River County Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD). Himanshu has been working in the Solid Waste / Recycling arena for the past 16 years after spending 2 years in the County's Utilities Department. Himanshu is a University of Florida graduate with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering. Himanshu worked in the environmental consulting industry for 9 years prior to joining Indian River County.

As Managing Director of SWDD, he is responsible for managing the collection, recycling and disposal of solid waste from unincorporated Indian River County and municipalities of Vero Beach, Orchid, Fellsmere, Sebastian, and Indian River Shores. He oversees the County's current solid waste management and disposal facility in Vero Beach, five customer convenience centers, a hazardous waste management program, and a recycling program.



### **Rebecca Olson, Assistant Director of Utilities & Solid Waste, St. Lucie County**

Rebecca was born in Indiana and lived in eight different states before settling in Florida. After serving in the US Navy for six years, she spent seven years in the nuclear power industry and a year abroad teaching English in places like Vietnam, the Czech Republic, and Poland. In 2015, she decided to call St. Lucie County home.

Rebecca has been with St. Lucie County for almost four years and has over 20 years of experience in the utilities sector (energy, water/wastewater/solid waste). In addition to FEMA certifications required for emergency management, she is a certified landfill operator, Six Sigma Green Belt certified, Executive Management certified, and holds a Master of Science in Management. She is currently pursuing a graduate certificate in Public Administration from Florida State University.



### **Dan Pellowitz, Solid Waste Authority Executive Director, Palm Beach County**

Dan Pellowitz is the Executive Director of the Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County (SWA) and has served in that capacity since 2018. He has 31 years of solid waste management experience, all with the SWA, which owns and operates a highly respected and award-winning integrated solid waste management system serving the residents and businesses of Palm Beach County, Florida. Prior to his appointment by the Governing Board to Executive Director, Mr. Pellowitz previously served as the Managing Director from 2010 until 2018, the Assistant to the Executive Director from 2007 through 2010, and prior in various roles providing cost, operational and financial analytical support for the organization.

Mr. Pellowitz is highly knowledgeable in all aspects of the operation, financing, and administration of solid waste management and recycling programs, but is most proud of his role as a member of the team that planned, financed, designed, and constructed the SWA's Renewable Energy Facility No. 2, the newest, cleanest and greenest waste-to-energy facility in the United States.



### **Dave Robau, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Energy Network**

Dave Robau is one of the energy industry's foremost thinkers and strategists. As an advocate for resource conservation and sustainable energy, Dave has over 20 years of professional experience in the environmental engineering field.

He is the Founder and Chief Scientist for National Energy USA, a ClimateTech company based in Pensacola, Florida. He also serves as the Executive Director of a not-for-profit called Gulf Coast Energy Network where he leads a group of energy and sustainability professionals dedicated to expanding the renewable energy market across the Gulf Coast.

Before this, Dave served as an Environmental Scientist with the Air Force Special Operations Command in Florida where he led a team of scientists and engineers to develop the first plasma gasification waste-to-energy technology in the Department of Defense. In 2011, Mr. Robau received a White House Award as President Obama's "Champions of Change" for his dedication to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Dave is a graduate of the University of West Florida and serves on the Technical Advisory Board of the University of Central Florida's Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC) in Cocoa, Florida.



### **Michael W. Ruiz, Assistant County Administrator, Broward County**

Michael W. Ruiz joined Broward County as an Assistant County Administrator in May of 2022, after a twenty-year career in public service with Miami-Dade County. He is a first-generation American of Cuban descent, born in Miami and raised in Broward. Until the "dot com bust" of 2001, Mr. Ruiz worked in corporate sales for an Asian manufacturer of electronics, which jump started his journey into standards (ISO and QS), quality (TQM), and improvement (Lean and Six Sigma).

In 2002, Mr. Ruiz joined Miami-Dade County as an Employer Services Analyst with CareerSource South Florida. Not long after, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recruited him as a Management Consultant to assist with the refresh of the Miami-Dade County Strategic Plan. Over the years, OMB promoted him to Senior Management Consultant, Business Analyst, and finally Senior Business Analyst in the Budget division. In 2012, the Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces (PROS) department hired him as Chief of Budget and Financial Management and later promoted him to Assistant Director of Performance Excellence.

In 2017, soon after the impact of Hurricane Irma, the Department of Solid Waste Management, recruited Mr. Ruiz to take over all back-office duties as Assistant Director of Administration. He developed expertise in FEMA reimbursement for debris management, which totaled over \$148 million. This directly led to his June 2021 assignment in response to the partial building collapse of Champlain Towers South in Surfside. Mr. Ruiz supported Miami-Dade Fire Rescue and Miami-Dade Police with debris removal, transportation, heavy equipment, dewatering, warehouse leasing, federal reporting to FEMA and US EPA, and planning liaison to NIST.



### **Cheryl Sullivan, Director of Solid Waste Management, Monroe County**

Cheryl Sullivan, Monroe County Solid Waste Management Director, started with Monroe County in 2014 as a Customer Service/Billing Agent, learning from the ground up to earn her current position. Ms. Sullivan is responsible for the daily operations of three transfer stations supporting the Florida Keys, pollution control, recycling, specialty hauling licenses, solid waste non-ad valorem assessments, and billing.

While at Monroe County, Ms. Sullivan has championed the importance of the sensitive and unique Florida Keys environment through community involvement initiatives such as Trash Talkers, Coast Love, Put a Lid On It, and yard waste composting giveaways, to name a few. She expresses the importance of personal responsibility for debris management, recycling right, and illegal dumping on land and sea. Ms. Sullivan believes that open and accurate communication is the key to success for any objective, goal, project, or endeavor.

Previously, Ms. Sullivan worked for Dell Computer Corporation as an Operations Manager in both technical support and manufacturing, emphasizing daily operations and project management. Ms. Sullivan was instrumental in developing a new customer service campus in Idaho and relocating manufacturing from Texas to Tennessee. Ms. Sullivan has extensive training in “Green Belt” project management, training, championing, and teaching the “Change Agent and Lean” culture. Ms. Sullivan attended Middle Tennessee State University.