



# ST LUCIE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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ST LUCIE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

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# ST. LUCIE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### VISIT FLORIDA

Over the past five years, St. Lucie County has seen tremendous tourism growth in with three consecutive record years in tourist tax collections. Since 2012, tourist tax revenues have increased 37.8%.

This kind of growth is the direct result of tourism marketing. The St. Lucie County Tourism Office works closely with Visit Florida, the State's tourism marketing organization, on a variety of cooperative programs, initiatives and marketing efforts to extend our message into key markets that would otherwise be unattainable due to our limited budget. Without Visit Florida's support, exposure and global buying power, St. Lucie County's message would be otherwise unheard in the markets we target for visitors.

A reduction in state funding to Visit Florida would result in a reduction in the cooperative marketing opportunities St. Lucie County currently utilizes. The travel industry has become increasingly competitive and other states are outspending Florida to market their destinations and therefore gain more market share. The county supports continued funding of the program at a level that is productive for the organization and for the growth of tourism marketing on behalf of the county. The county supports the reauthorization of Visit Florida for another 10 years.



### **QUALIFIED TARGETED INDUSTRIES TAX REFUND**

The Qualified Target Industry (QTI) Tax Refund is a tool available to Florida communities to encourage quality job growth in targeted high value-added businesses, such as life sciences, aviation/aerospace or financial/professional services. If approved, the applicant may receive refunds on the taxes it pays. This includes corporate income, sales, ad valorem, intangible personal property, insurance premium, communications services, and certain other taxes.

This economic tool allows St. Lucie County to leverage our respective community when competing to obtain new or expanding businesses to our area, as well as assisting our existing businesses with retention. If this program is to sunset, it could jeopardize our performance in the marketing arena on a state, national or international level, placing our County in a difficult position economically.

Support the reauthorization of the Qualified Targeted Industries Tax Refund, which is scheduled to sunset in June of 2020, for an additional 10 years.



## **ST. LUCIE CULTURAL ALLIANCE**

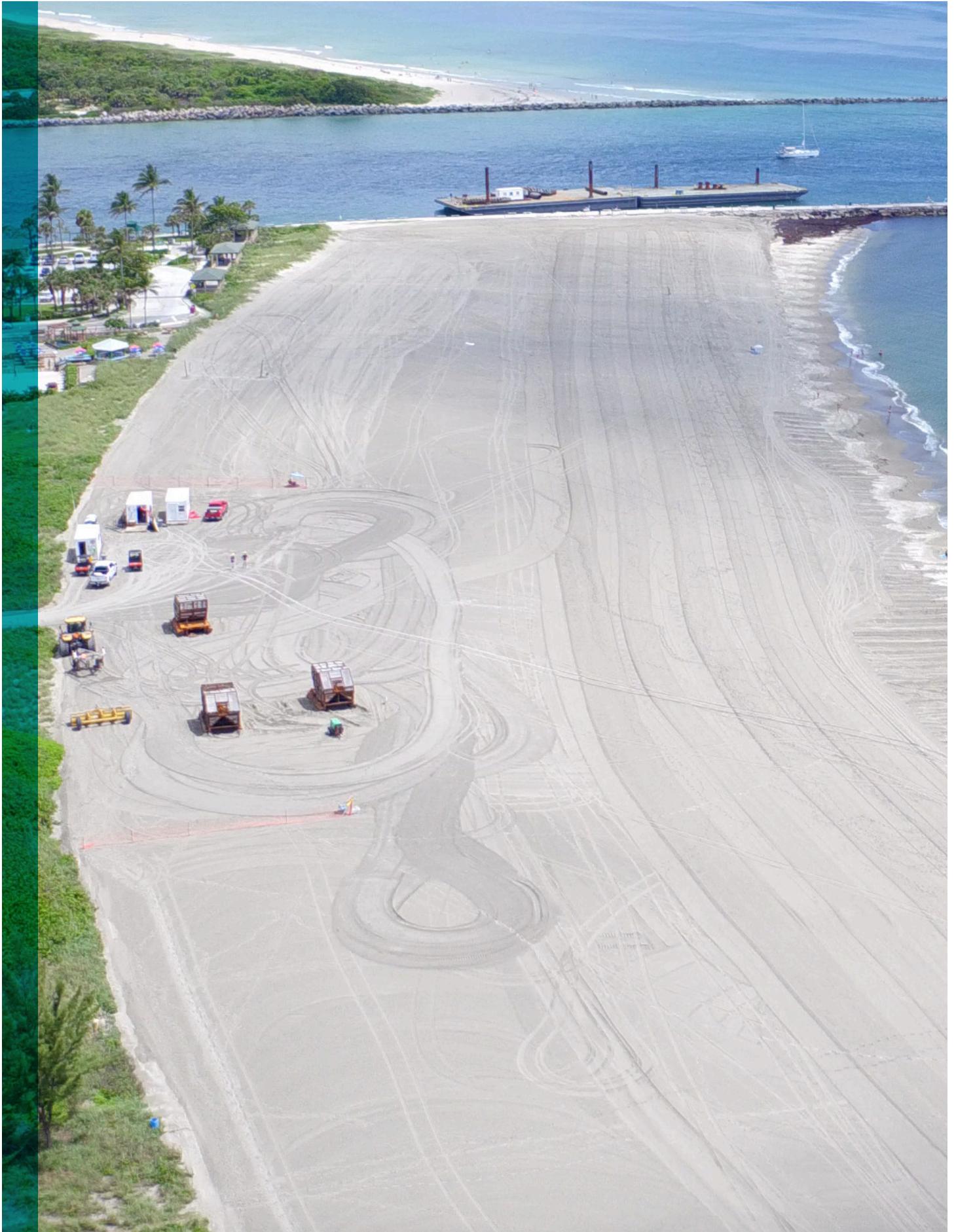
St. Lucie Cultural Alliance is the representative organization for the arts and cultural sector in St. Lucie County. The mission of the St. Lucie Cultural Alliance is to better position the arts and cultural sector as a significant contributor to the vibrancy, and educational and economic wellbeing, of St. Lucie County. St. Lucie County supports the full funding of the Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs to better assist St. Lucie Cultural Alliance's application for the in the Underserved / Salary Assistance category for FY2020-21 funding in the amount of \$25,000.

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## **SUPPORT ISSUES**

### **ENTERPRISE FLORIDA/JOB GROWTH GRANT FUND**

The County supports an increase in funding of the Florida Job Growth Grant, to restore it to its former level of \$85 million. Furthermore, to support the state's economic development toolkit in a manner that supports increased economic growth and development by incentivizing businesses to relocate to or expand in all regions of the state of Florida.



# BUDGET & TAXATION POLICY



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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### UNFUNDED MANDATES/HOME RULE

The State Legislature has frequently passed legislation that compels local governments to provide a service, program, or benefit without providing the appropriate funding or a funding source. This compromises local governments' ability to provide services requested by their local communities by diverting resources to these state-directed, unfunded mandates or cost shifts. In addition, as more and more mandates are created, local governments are faced with the burden of using local tax dollars to finance functions that they have little control over.

The state must do a better job of truthfully identifying costs to local governments when passing new legislation and must provide funding or a funding source for every legislative initiative that imposes a cost on counties. St. Lucie County opposes new unfunded mandates and unfunded state to county cost shifts.

During the past few Legislative Sessions, there have been a significant number of legislative bills filed that proposed to preempt the Home Rule Authority of local governments thereby preventing the ability of local governments to respond in a timely manner to matters of local importance. It is imperative and critical that decisions and legislation regarding local government services be left to the form of government closest to the citizens. Therefore, the County opposes any legislation that would preempt our Home Rule Authority.



### **BUILDING AND CODE REGULATION**

St. Lucie County is comparatively a small building department with low permit fees. The reserve fund has slowly grown in the last seven years from \$1.5 million to 3.8 million. Currently, F.S. 553.80 the Building Construction Standards Enforcement, does not provide for an exemption for county building departments with comparatively lower reserves. Planning and zoning or other governmental activities may not be funded with fees adopted for enforcing the Florida Building Code.

The County supports an exemption of those Counties with reserves of less than \$5 million a year, and in addition, support efforts to include zoning services to be funded with fees adopted for enforcing the Florida Building Code.



**LOCAL FUEL TAX INDEXING**

Local fuel tax revenues, also known as gas tax, have been constantly eroding as the costs of road construction and maintenance has increased as well as vehicles becoming more fuel-efficient. Unlike local governments, the Florida Department of Transportation has the ability to index their motor fuel tax rate as it relates to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Without the ability for local governments to index, we are unable to keep pace with our growing transportation costs and needs.

St. Lucie County supports legislation to allow counties and municipalities the ability to annual index the local fuel tax as it relates to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

LEVEL	TAX	AMOUNT
<b>FEDERAL</b>		
Not Indexed	Fuel Excise Tax	Gasoline - 18.4¢/gal Gasohol - 18.4¢/gal Diesel - 24.4¢/gal
<b>STATE (DISTRIBUTED BY FDOT)</b>		
Indexed	Fuel Sales Tax	All Fuels - 18.4¢/gal
Indexed	SCETS Tax	Gas/Gasohol - 6.4 - 7.4¢/gal
Indexed	SCETS Tax	Diesel - 7.4¢/gal
<b>STATE (DISTRIBUTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS)</b>		
Not Indexed	Constitutional Fuel Tax	All Fuels - 2¢/gal
Not Indexed	County Fuel Tax	All Fuels - 1¢/gal
Not Indexed	Municipal Fuel Tax	All Fuels - 1¢/gal
<b>STATE (DISTRIBUTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS)</b>		
Not Indexed	Ninth-Cent Fuel Tax	Gas/Gasohol - 0 - 1¢/gal Diesel - 1¢/gal
Not Indexed	Local Option Fuel Tax	Gas/Gasohol - 0 - 11¢/gal Diesel - 6¢/gal

### **AVIATION FUEL TAX**

The aviation fuel tax contributes to the State Transportation Trust that in turn funds the Aviation Grant Program. The Aviation Grant Program provides financial assistance to Florida's airports in the areas of safety, security, preservation, capacity improvement, land acquisition, planning, and economic development. The program also provides funding to assist local governments and airport authorities in planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining public-use aviation facilities. For example, the new MRO hangar at the Treasure Coast International Airport is one of these projects funded through this program.

The county opposes legislation that would modify current aviation fuel taxes in a manner that would negatively impact counties or the state's ability to provide resources in support of aviation transportation related operations.

### **COMMUNICATION SERVICES TAX**

The county opposes legislation that would revise current law in a manner that significantly reduces current local government related revenues.

Furthermore, the county does support amending and/or revising current law in a manner that is considered revenue neutral, simplifies administration and collection of the current tax, provides for a broad and equitable tax base, provides for enhanced stability and reliability as an important revenue source for local government and provides the opportunity for market-based growth.

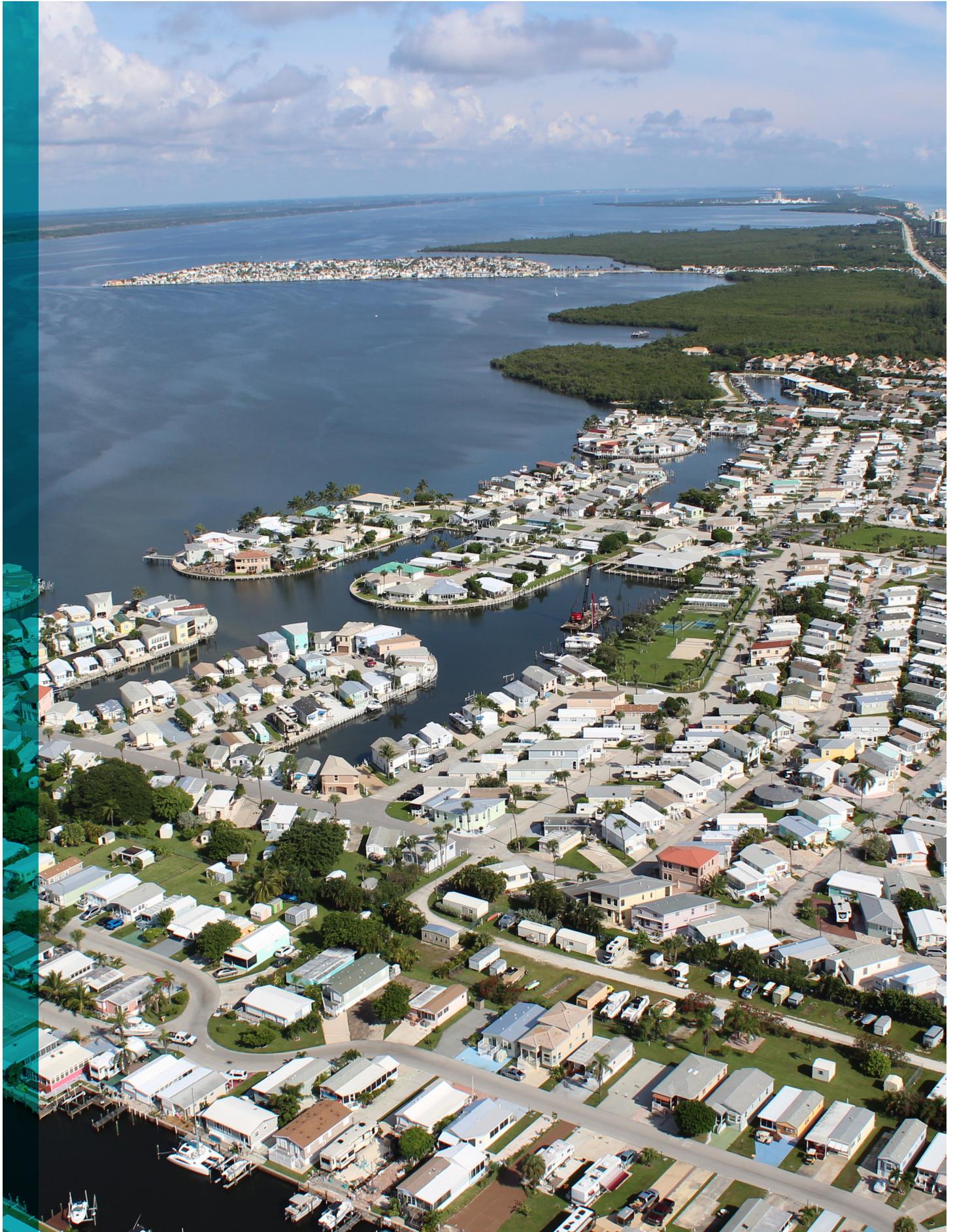


### **LOCAL DISCRETIONARY REVENUE FLEXIBILITY**

The county supports modifications to existing laws governing local discretionary sales tax revenue sources to provide greater simplification, flexibility and more efficient administration and management. As well as, expanding the eligibility to levy the Charter County Transportation Surtax and the Documentary Surtax to all counties.

### **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TAX**

The county opposes any legislation that will allow the use of tourism development tax for anything other than for the promotion of tourism.



# ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURAL RESOURCES



## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### LAND APPLICATION OF BIOSOLIDS

St. Lucie County supports the efforts of the state and local governments to prioritize the reduction and eventual elimination of the land application, and most importantly the composting of Class B and AA Biosolids. Both Class B and AA Biosolids contain high amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus. Biosolids provide an inefficient form of fertilization, as only a fraction of nutrients are plant available. This results in over fertilization, which runs off into surface waters or migrates into groundwater, leading to negative outcomes that affect surface and other water resources.

The county supports efforts to immediately establish standard protocols and funding for the identification, tracking and monitoring of Biosolids, to include class AA Biosolids, application. Fund and promote emerging and innovative wastewater treatment technologies to improve Biosolids resource, recovery and management options.

### TREASURE COAST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SCRUB-JAY HABITAT **\$600,000**

The goal of this project is to assist St. Lucie County with the development of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to address impacts to the federally listed Florida Scrub-Jay relating to development within the vicinity of the Treasure Coast International Airport (TCIA). The Countywide HCP will provide projects consistent with its standards, reduced permitting time frames, providing a direct economic benefit to St. Lucie County, landowners, developers and businesses.



### BEACH AND INLET MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

The Beach Management Funding Assistance Program is a Long-Range Budget Plan administered through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to assist eligible local governments with their beach erosion control projects. Each application request must include a detailed project description, cost estimate, and supporting resolution from the governing body. Individual projects then receive a priority ranking based upon several criteria.

Project	Project Description	Requested Amount	County Match
Fort Pierce Shore Protection Project	2021 physical and biological monitoring/tilling	\$140,000	\$140,000
Southern St. Lucie County Beach Restoration	2021 Construction Oversight	\$34,792	\$45,208
Fort Pierce Inlet Management Plan	2021 Post-Construction Physical/Biological Monitoring	\$27,500	\$27,50
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$202,292</b>	<b>\$212,708</b>

## **BEACH SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING**

St. Lucie County supports any supplemental effort by the legislature to help address critical beach erosion as a result of Hurricane Dorian. Specifically those impacts to the Fort Pierce Shore Protection and the South County Beach Restoration projects.

## **COMPREHENSIVE WATER REFORM**

Historically, the state has failed to adequately address the water issues creating an urgent need for comprehensive water reform. Water quality issues impact public health, the environment and local economies.

The county supports legislation intended to assess and regularly report the financial need to address Florida's water infrastructure relating to water supply, including conservation, the protection of water quality, stormwater, wastewater, water reuse, flood control and environmental resource protection and restoration.

The county supports legislation that promotes the identification of potential sources of sufficient funding to address the documented need, as well as, the development of priority and science-based grant programs for the implementation of projects, programs, and studies identified by local governments, water management districts, and state agencies.

The county supports legislation requiring the assessment and evaluation of state agency efforts to address sea level rise and other weather impacts on the County. The county also supports continued funding for research and mitigation for harmful algal blooms (HABs), including blue green algae, and red tide.

**INDIAN RIVER LAGOON SOUTH:  
COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECT**

The county supports continued dedicated funding for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and supports long-term funding commitments to finance the completion of the projects on the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS), with a priority given to the Indian River Lagoon-South (IRL-S) Project including funding for the C-23/24 and C-25 reservoirs and STAs.

The Indian River Lagoon-South Restoration Project, part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), was authorized to address the damaging effects of pollution and unnaturally large freshwater discharges and local basin runoff on our ecologically vital water bodies. The completion of this project will greatly reduce polluted discharges into the St. Lucie River and the Indian River Lagoon.



## ZIKA/MOSQUITO CONTROL

The control of disease-carrying mosquitoes is one of Florida's most pressing public health concerns. The sudden appearance of the Zika virus in our state over the past year demonstrates clearly the vulnerability of mosquito control in such a wet, warm environment where disease can spread quickly if not abated through efficient, effective mosquito management techniques. The St. Lucie Mosquito Control District depends on multiple state and non-profit agencies that help provide regulatory supervision, training, public health and mosquito education – all needed to provide a concentrated, coordinated attack on public health threats such as the Zika virus. In recent years, these agencies and organizations have suffered budget cuts that have dramatically curtailed their services. This has had a negative impact on mosquito abatement in Florida at a time when we need it the most.

We look to the Florida Legislature and Governor to provide sufficient resources to:

- ▶ The Florida Department of Health, the primary agency responsible for enforcing the emergency public health order imposed by Gov. Scott in February.
- ▶ The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which is responsible for regulatory guidance and funding support as the threat from mosquito-borne diseases persists throughout the District and the state of Florida.
- ▶ The Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory, the mosquito biology “think tank” performing scientific research that mosquito control districts rely upon and cannot conduct themselves.

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## SUPPORT ISSUES

### **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: BEACH FUNDING & PERMITTING**

St. Lucie County supports the creation of a new dedicated and recurring statutory funding source of at least \$50 million for beach renourishment projects that accurately reflects the increase in participating programs and future beach and inlet project funding needs. The previous statutory commitment of \$30 million created in 1998 was repealed during Amendment 1 implementation. Since that time, the beach program has received just over \$50 million each year between Land Acquisition Trust Funds and General Revenue.

### **HYDRAULIC FRACTURING**

Hydraulic fracturing is a technique that involves stimulating the well to extract oil and gas. Large amounts of fluid under pressure are injected into a wellbore to create and extend fractures in the rock formation. The fractures are held open by a slurry mixture that allows natural gas to flow from the fractures into the production well.

Oppose any legislation that would preempt County regulations when pertaining to the process of hydraulic fracturing.





### **BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS (BMAP)**

Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP) is the “blueprint” for restoring impaired waters by reducing pollutant loadings to meet the allowable loadings established in a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). It represents a comprehensive set of strategies: permit limits on wastewater facilities, urban and agricultural best management practices, conservation programs, financial assistance and revenue generating activities, etc. designed to implement the pollutant reductions established by the TMDL.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has substantially increased the required reduction goals for stakeholders within the St. Lucie Estuary BMAP. These increases will force the County to seek alternative projects that provide for efficient nutrient reduction. St. Lucie County supports the efforts to provide the following additional activities to the approved list for consideration:

- ▶ Aquatic Vegetation Removal
- ▶ Grassed Swale Material Removal
- ▶ Dispersed Water Storage
- ▶ Natural Land Storage



# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### TAYLOR CREEK RESTORATION DREDGING

**\$3,164,790**

Taylor Creek is a tributary to the Indian River Lagoon that serves as a major stormwater outfall for the northwest region of St. Lucie County. The Indian River Lagoon is one of the most biologically diverse estuaries in North America. Muck sediments have accumulated in the navigation channel of Taylor Creek since it was last dredged over fifteen years ago. In 2019, St. Lucie County received appropriations to assist in preparation of the design plans and permits to implement dredging of the Creek between US Highway 1 and the Intracoastal Waterway. The county is seeking the remainder of the funds for the full construction of this project. Upon completion, this will prevent the muck sediments from migrating on to the seagrass beds in the Indian River Lagoon and will provide navigational benefits to the Marinas and Port of Fort Pierce.

### PORT OF FORT PIERCE

In 2018, the county invested in the purchase of a 12 acre site, known as the King Maritime Terminal, at the Port of Fort Pierce. Although the Port of Fort Pierce lies physically within the City of Fort Pierce limits, management falls under the jurisdiction of St. Lucie County. Currently, there is an interlocal agreement between the City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County, which clarifies roles and responsibilities and sets the framework for future collaboration and partnership in port development.

In 1990, the Florida Legislature created the Florida Seaport Transportation & Economic Development (FSTED), an on-port investment program, which is administered by FSTED, consisting of the port directors of the 15 public seaports, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, and the Director of the Department of Economic Opportunity. This state and local investment entity is statutorily charged with accomplishing the state's seaport development mission of implementing capital improvement projects at the local level.

St. Lucie County supports the full funding of all projects within the Florida Department of Transportation's Seaport Program and the Florida Seaport Transportation & Economic Development (FSTED).

### **MIDWAY ROAD TRANSPORTATION PROJECT**

St. Lucie County supports the full funding of the emerging Strategic Intermodal System, Midway Road construction project, with the addition of a new Turnpike interchange and partnership with the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and Florida Department of Transportation to assist in the overall expansion of the Midway Road overpass on the Turnpike.



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## SUPPORT ISSUES

### TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED PROGRAMS

Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) funding is an important funding source to provide the most economically challenged customers with discounted rides on both our fixed route and CONNECTION services. St. Lucie County supports attempts to maintain funding to the TD program and to prevent diversion of these dollars for other purposes.

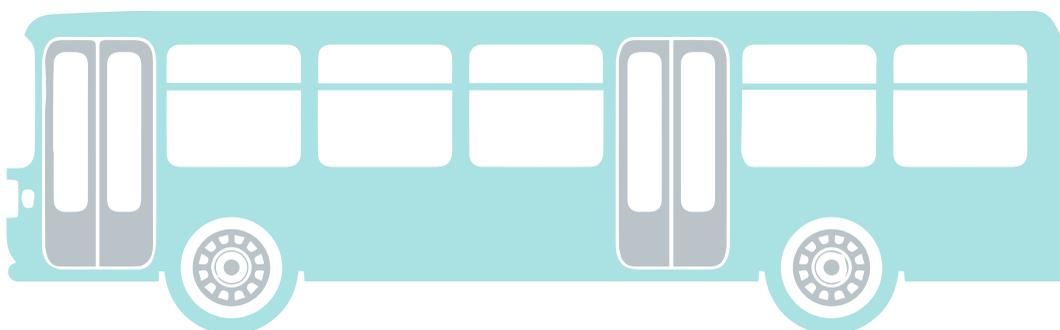
### STATE TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND

The Florida Transportation Trust Fund is made up of state fuel taxes, motor vehicle fees, tolls and federal grants, and was designed to fund critical road building projects. Transportation is the backbone of Florida's economy and it is important that these funds be used to pay for transportation projects that will put Floridians to work and improve the state's aging infrastructure.

St. Lucie County opposes any effort to divert revenues from the State Transportation Trust Fund for non-transportation purposes.

### STRATEGIC INTERMODAL SYSTEM (SIS)

St. Lucie County supports legislation allowing SIS funds to be used on roads and other transportation facilities not designated on the SIS network if the improvement relieves congestion on the SIS.





# PUBLIC SAFETY

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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### SCHOOL SAFETY AND SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

St. Lucie County supports the creation of a new dedicated and recurring statutory funding source to fully fund the mandated positions of School Resource Officers (SRO) in all public schools. This mandate has placed a heavy burden on local agencies to fund additional SROs through ad valorem taxes. Funding of the recurring cost of SROs through the requirement of this mandate is unsustainable, resulting in the necessity of cutting other public services and having a direct negative impact on the welfare and public safety of all counties in the state.

### INMATE MEDICAL COSTS

The County supports legislation that reduces jail expenses by setting a reimbursement amount paid by counties to medical providers for health care services for inmates and arrestees at no higher than the established Medicare rate plus 10%, the same rate as currently charged to the Department of Corrections, unless there is an existing contract in place or a business practice providing a lower rate. The county also supports continued efforts to work through the Medicaid reform initiative to ensure that persons with substance abuse and mental health treatment needs are appropriately served.

### PRE-TRIAL RELEASE

In 2012, legislation was filed that would have significantly hampered the ability of local governments to administer their pretrial release programs. According to estimates from the St. Lucie County Criminal Justice Commission, the restrictions that would have



been created by this legislation would likely cause defendants each month who are on supervised release to be retained in custody. Current supervised release programs cost \$4 per day, whereas costs to house a defendant in jail are approximately \$123 per day. Support maintaining county ability to provide non-monetary pre-trial release services that ensure the safety and welfare of local communities and oppose legislation that would limit the discretion of first appearance judges to prescribe pre-trial options for defendants.

#### **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)**

The county supports continued state funding for the county EOC to ensure it is able to meet the structural survivability and operational space criteria established by the state and federal government.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH COURT**

In the 2016 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed House Bill 439, which created the statutory authority for each county to fund and establish a mental health court program that provides pretrial intervention and post adjudicatory treatment-based programs. The legislation also requires each judicial circuit to establish at least one coordinator position for the Mental Health Court Program, however this position is contingent upon annual appropriation from the state.

The county supports the state appropriating the funds needed to establish the position of Mental Health Court Coordinator within the 19th Judicial Circuit.



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## SUPPORT ISSUES

### PREVENTION, TREATMENT, AND REHABILITATION

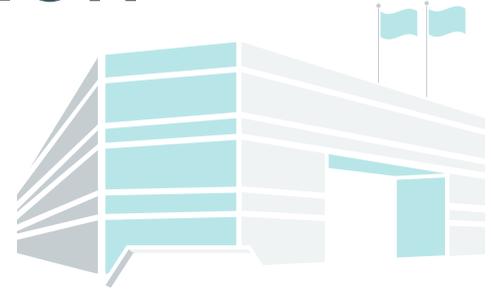
St. Lucie County supports initiatives that reduce juvenile detention through prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services.

### JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES

The county supports the legislature appropriating state funds to the Department of Juvenile Justice to upgrade, renovate, or reconstruct detention centers across Florida that are in a state of despair. To support state investments in juvenile facilities to improve the conditions of secure confinement for detained youth without such costs being shifted to the counties. In addition, the county supports measures that ensure that adequate safety, supervision, and facility maintenance is provided at juvenile residential assessment centers and secure detention facilities.



# GENERAL ADMINISTRATION



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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

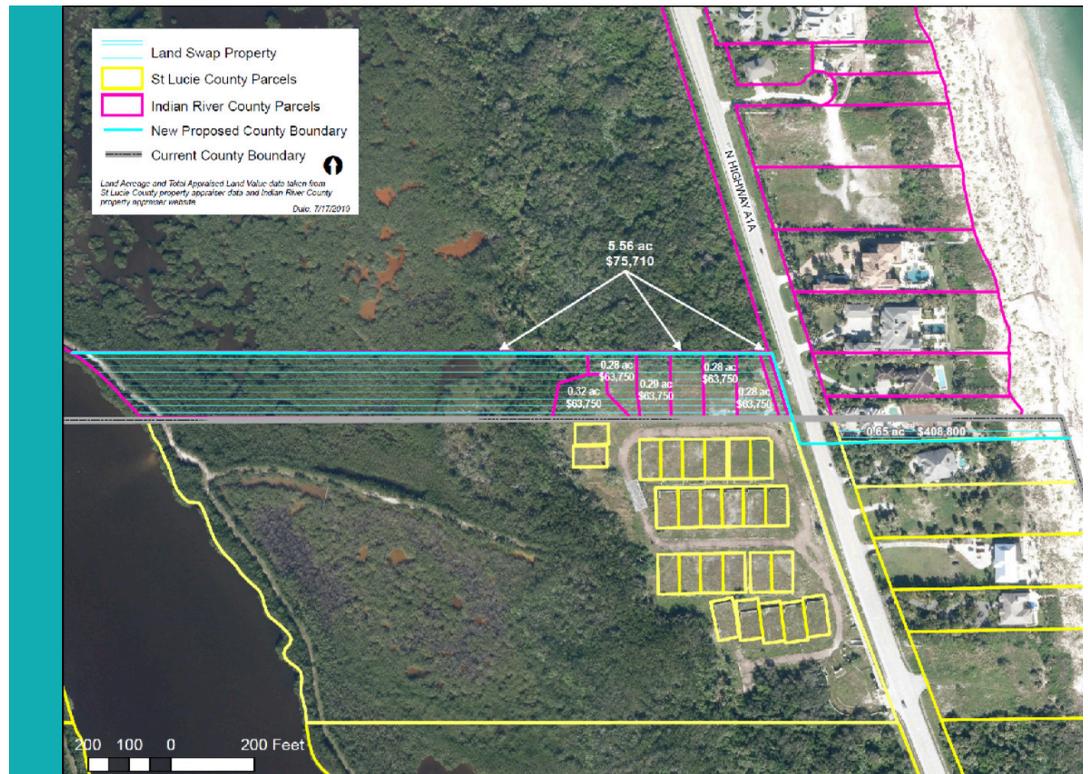
### ST. LUCIE AND INDIAN RIVER COUNTY BOUNDARY LINE CHANGE

St. Lucie and Indian River Counties have successfully negotiated a change in their respective boundary lines. The change will be implemented in the northeast corner of St. Lucie County. After final approval of the county boundary change, .65 acres will be moved to Indian River County and a total of 7.01 acres will be moved to St. Lucie County.

### CUSTOMARY USE

Two years ago, the Florida Legislature created section 163.035, Florida Statutes, establishing a two-step process for local governments to following when considering affirming the existence of customary use. The first step requires the local government to conduct a public hearing. The local government must provide notice of the public hearing by certified mail to each property owner, by newspaper and posting on the local government's website. At the public hearing, the local governing board considers whether to adopt a formal notice of intent to affirm the existence of a recreational customary use on private property. The notice of intent must specifically identify the following:

1. The specific parcels of property or the specific portions thereof, upon which a customary use affirmation is sought;
2. The detailed, specific, and individual use or uses of the parcels of property to which a customary use affirmation is sought; and
3. Each source of evidence that the governmental entity would rely upon to prove a recreational customary use has been ancient, reasonable, without interruption, and free from dispute.



After the public hearing, the statute requires that the local government then file a lawsuit within 60 days. The local government provides notice to the property owners again and the court conducts a de novo review of the local government determination.

Support a change to the statute that maintains the local government public hearing process as set forth in section 163.035(3)(a), but eliminates the judicial determination requirements set forth in section 163.035(3)(b). Thus, the local government would still be required to meet all of the public hearing and evidentiary requirements set forth in the statute. Instead of repeating the entire public hearing in court, if there were an aggrieved party, that party would still have the ability to appeal the decision in court.

# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### COUNTY SHARE OF COST FOR MEDICAID SERVICES

St. Lucie County supports establishing a cap on growth in the individual county Medicaid costs under F.S. 409.915, to address the cost shifts that result from the transition to a Medicaid enrollee based cost-sharing system. The county opposes efforts to further shift state Medicaid costs to counties.

### MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES AND FUNDING

In the last two years, over \$30 million in mental health funding had been lost to Florida's communities. Increased community funding is required to meet the needs of persons residing in the Treasure Coast who are mentally ill and often have severe substance use disorders.

Additionally, the human and economic costs of untreated mental illness in our state continue to rise. Those costs include the criminalization of people with untreated mental illness, family erosion, substance abuse, job loss, domestic violence, homelessness, medical problems, crime and suicide. Florida must do more to invest and fund community-based and integrated mental healthcare.

The county supports efforts to increase supportive housing, jail diversion, and employment and education initiatives for people with mental health or substance abuse issues. Supports diverting, medically assisting, or treating mentally ill outside of the criminal justice process through alternative programs, such as Crisis Intervention Teams. Supports

continued efforts to work through Medicaid reform initiatives to ensure that persons with substance abuse and mental health treatment needs are appropriately served.

Furthermore, St. Lucie County supports appropriate funding for core mental health and substance abuse services. The county supports increased funding of the Criminal Justice Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program with recurring dollars in a trust fund. Additionally, the county supports sustainable matching state funds to counties that have received both planning and implementation Reinvestment Grant funds.

#### **VETERANS ASSISTANCE CENTER**

**\$875,000**

St. Lucie County's Veterans Services Department is requesting funding to assist in establishing a Veteran's Assistance Center, which will serve our veterans who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or unable to obtain safe, affordable housing in the Treasure Coast area. This central location will assist them in opportunities to return to employment, safe housing, health care and mental health services, as well as assistance in Veterans Administration (VA) record recover and benefit claims processing.

#### **MCNEIL MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT**

**\$400,000**

St. Lucie County is requesting funding to assist with a Local Government Contribution (LGC), as required for a Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) Request for Application for the construction of multifamily housing. If the funds are awarded, a much needed 188 unit multifamily housing community will be constructed to address the shortage of affordable housing opportunities for low to moderate income renters in St. Lucie County.

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## **SUPPORT ISSUES**

### **COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

The county supports preserving the ability of County Health Departments (CHD) to provide primary care and direct patient care services, particularly in communities without adequate substitutes or alternative providers for these services, maintaining state general revenue funding for County Health Departments, and maintaining a coordinated system of county health departments that is centrally housed within the Department of Health (DOH).

The county opposes efforts to decentralize the public health system by transferring authority over CHDs from the DOH to the respective county governments, any state reductions to the County Health Department Trust Funds; and any efforts, legislative or otherwise, to limit or eliminate the provision of primary care services in CHDs.

### **HOMELESSNESS**

The county supports developing a dedicated state funding source for homeless programs. The county supports legislation that streamlines current state statutes relating to homelessness and associated programs. The county supports the implementation of discharge protocols and/or procedures for hospitals and correctional facilities when releasing homeless persons. Additionally, the county supports the development of strategies that would allow local governments to work with the state and federal government to serve target populations: the chronically homeless, veterans, and families and children, with particular emphasis on children aging out of the foster care system.

### **HEALTHY FAMILIES**

The county supports a continuation of funding for the Florida Healthy Families and Healthy Start programs.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The State of Florida established the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund to create a source of funding for affordable housing. Funding comes from a dedicated tax on housing transactions. Recently, the trust fund has been swept by the State Legislature for other uses.

The County supports allocating the full amount of dedicated documentary tax revenues for state and local affordable housing programs. As well as, supports investing in affordable housing to create jobs in home repair, hardening homes, retrofitting and constructing affordable rental units, and lowering energy costs to make housing more affordable.

### **EARLY STEPS PROGRAM**

Treasure Coast Early Steps Program, within Children's Medical Services, serves families with infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months of age, who have developmental delays or an established condition likely to result in a developmental delay. Each child receives an Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) that meets his or her needs. Families and caregivers also receive support to develop the skills and confidence they need to help their children learn and develop. The county supports continued funding of the program.

### **COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE CLINICS/HANDS**

The County strongly supports the continuation or increase of funding for all Community Healthcare Clinics, such as the HANDS Clinic in Fort Pierce.

# EDUCATION

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## SUPPORT ISSUES

### STATE LIBRARY FUNDING

Local governments receive state support for libraries through three different programs: the State Aid program, the Regional Multi-type Library Cooperative Grant program, and the Public Library Construction Grant program. The county was a grateful recipient of \$500,000 from the Public Library Construction Grant program to assist in the construction of the Paula E. Lewis Library. The continuation of these funding sources will ensure that the state will play an appropriate role in enhancing public library service by matching local library expenditures, enhancing consortia services to area libraries, and providing needed dollars for the construction of new public libraries.

### INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE (IRSC)

The county supports IRSC's top legislative priority in 2020 - full funding to construct the Treasure Coast Advanced Manufacturing Center. IRSC is requesting \$10,637,108 in Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funding to build a state-of-the-art, 55,000+ square foot training facility on its main campus in Fort Pierce. The \$23.3 million project has received a combined \$10.7 million in previous legislative sessions (including \$4.2 million in 2019) and will have a local, private fund match of \$2 million from the IRSC Foundation.





The Advanced Manufacturing Center will expand IRSC’s capacity to offer training in smart and additive manufacturing, and serve as home to important industrial skills programs such as HVAC, Automotive Technology, Welding, Electrical Systems, and more. The endeavor will provide new opportunities for industry partnerships, applied learning and apprenticeships, and K-12 engagement in Dual Enrollment, CAPE, and beyond. This modern educational facility will also be instrumental in supporting regional economic development efforts, including those in St. Lucie County with respect to the Port of Fort Pierce, the Treasure Coast International Airport, and more.

The county supports IRSC with increased operational funding for student success initiatives, workforce programs in high-skill, high-wage industries, and enhancing the institution’s capacity to serve the community and grow the regional talent pipeline. Additional investment in the Florida College System (FCS) and IRSC will ensure that the State of Florida meets its new ‘SAIL to 60’ attainment goal – that 60 percent of working-age Floridians hold a high value postsecondary certificate, degree, or training experience by 2030. Moreover, further investment in operational funding is necessary to absorb rising costs of Dual Enrollment and general upkeep and maintenance of FCS campuses.

# AGRICULTURE

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## SUPPORT ISSUES

### INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANT RESEARCH UF IFAS

The UF/IFAS Biological Control Research & Containment Laboratory is a quarantine facility that opened in 2004 at the Indian River Research & Education Center. The facility is a highly secure lab where scientists conduct research on exotic biological control agents for invasive species. Biological control uses natural enemies to control plant and insect pests. Scientists introduce, evaluate, and release biological control agents to try to manage exotic weeds and insect pests in Florida.

UF/IFAS scientists at the quarantine facility are working on many projects, including:

- ▶ Releasing two biological control agents of Brazilian peppertree at numerous sites in southern Florida.
- ▶ Studies of biology and host specificity of insects from Australia that attack ear leaf acacia.
- ▶ Providing air potato beetles to homeowners and land managers for biological control of the air potato at multiple locations on the Treasure Coast.
- ▶ Laboratory and field bioassays of insect-killing fungi for biological control of the Asian citrus psyllid that vectors the bacterium causing greening disease in citrus and ambrosia beetles that vector the fungus causing laurel wilt disease in avocados.

The county supports continued funding which will benefit the Invasive Exotic Plant Research located at the University of Florida IFAS in Fort Pierce.

## **AQUACULTURE RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION FACILITY**

The mission of the IRREC aquaculture program is to conduct research relevant to the aquaculture industry in Florida and the southeastern United States and to provide information to aquaculture producers.

UF/IFAS scientists at the aquaculture facility are working on many projects, including:

- ▶ Defining culture methods for marine ornamental fish species including broodstock reproduction and defining optimal culture parameters and feeding regimes for all stages of development to produce market-size fish.
- ▶ Evaluating the aquaculture potential of marine fish species for bait.
- ▶ Evaluating the production of marine copepods and other live feeds for larval marine fish.
- ▶ Evaluating broodstock nutrition and reproduction of multiple marine and freshwater fishes.

## **FLORIDA 4-H PROGRAMS**

In 2019, Governor Ron DeSantis vetoed line item 149, Institute of Food and Agriculture Science (IFAS), which covers STEM, Workforce and most importantly the 4-H Programs. Florida 4-H relies primarily on funding from the closet University through the local extension office, for example our University of Florida IFAS in Fort Pierce. With the loss in funding for the 2019-2020 year, it will be a difficult time for 4-H Programs, such as the livestock, cooking, civil disclosure, archery and many other 4-H programs.

St. Lucie County supports the full funding and respectfully requests the Governor's support of the Florida 4-H Programs.



**St Lucie County Board of County Commissioners**

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[www.stlucieco.gov](http://www.stlucieco.gov)