



# 2022 State Legislative Program

Indian River County Board of County Commissioners  
Adopted: Upon Board Approval



# 2022 Florida Legislative Session

The 2022 Florida Legislative Session will convene in Tallahassee, on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 and will run through March 11, 2022.

**Guiding Principles**

**State Appropriation Requests**

**Legislative Priorities**

**Concerns**



## Indian River County's State Delegation



**Senator  
Debbie Mayfield  
District 17**



**Representative  
Erin Grall  
District 54**



## Guiding Principles

The ability to maintain home rule and to avoid unfunded mandates are central to Indian River County's state legislative priorities and concerns. Indian River County works with the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and other local governments across the State of Florida to advocate for these ideals. In general, the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) supports FAC's legislative policy statements.

- Indian River County BCC **SUPPORTS** maintaining the integrity of county home rule power, both administrative and fiscal, which allows counties to develop and implement community-based solutions to local problems.
- Indian River County BCC **OPPOSES** any unfunded mandate legislation which would compel local governments to provide a service, program, or benefit without providing the appropriate monies or a funding source.



# State Appropriation Requests

## Ixora Park Sewer System Rehabilitation

Requested Amount: \$3,000,000

The Ixora Park Sewer System Rehabilitation project will replace a sanitary sewer collection system that has reached the end of its service life. Frequent failures of the system result in sink holes in the community's roadways, presenting a public safety hazard and service interruptions. The current system is comprised of 9,700 linear feet of vitrified clay pipe gravity sanitary sewer and 23 manholes adjacent to the South Relief Canal, a tributary of the Indian River Lagoon. The total projected cost of the project is \$12 million.

## Hobart Water Treatment Plant SCADA System Upgrade

Requested Amount: \$615,000

This project will upgrade the electrical and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems at the Hobart Water Treatment Plant so that both of the County's water treatment plants will be on the same SCADA system. This system enables plant operators to centrally and remotely access, monitor and perform systematic operations for all of the key processes used in water production. The total projected cost is \$1,230,000.



## Legislative Priorities

### Indian River Lagoon

The 156-mile-long Indian River Lagoon is one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the nation and is a treasure for the State of Florida. The Lagoon provides an economic benefit by promoting tourism and creating recreational opportunities for residents. The Lagoon is also an important element in the protection of our environment, including endangered and protected plant and animal populations.

The County hopes to continue its partnership with the State of Florida on future ventures that will reduce the nutrient load in the Lagoon so future generations can enjoy this natural wonder.

**Position:** Indian River County BCC **SUPPORTS** policies that will enhance the economic wellbeing of Indian River County by treating and monitoring the health of the Lagoon; and **SUPPORTS** funding for projects, including septic to sewer conversions, that will aid in protection of the Lagoon.



## Legislative Priorities

### Beach Restoration and Renourishment

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has a Beach Management Funding Assistance Program to protect and restore the state's beaches. Erosion leaves miles of beaches, public infrastructure and upland development vulnerable to future storm events as well as impacting tourism. Currently, beach renourishment is funded via documentary stamps along with countless other programs. This leaves beach renourishment projects fighting every year for a very small piece of a large pie.

Indian River County, like its sister counties to the north and to the south on Florida's east coast, has a natural nearshore hardbottom resource. This resource is classified as an essential fish habitat. It provides foraging and breeding grounds for juvenile fish. Indian River County's beach management plan is specifically customized to maximize the fill while minimizing the impact to the nearshore hardbottom resource.

**Position:** Indian River County BCC **SUPPORTS** the creation of a newly dedicated and reoccurring statutory funding source for beach restoration and renourishment projects.



# Legislative Priorities

## Broadband Internet Service

The lack of broadband internet service in rural and underserved areas was a challenge for many households and businesses across the state during the COVID-19 pandemic. This created roadblocks for business expansion in rural and underserved areas of our community. It is imperative that these areas contain the infrastructure and service capability necessary to provide efficient internet service to residents.

By working with the Florida Legislature, the Office of Broadband, and community stakeholders, Indian River County hopes to implement programs that will aid in providing efficient internet service to the rural and underserved communities within the County.

Position: Indian River County BCC **SUPPORTS** legislation which directs the Office of Broadband to expand access to effective broadband internet service in rural and underserved areas; and **SUPPORTS** additional funding for grant programs and initiatives that promote access to effective broadband internet service in rural and underserved areas.



# Additional Legislative Priorities

## Affordable Housing

**SUPPORT** the existing state housing trust funds for affordable housing programs, specifically the local State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) and State Apartment Incentive Loan program (SAIL) and **OPPOSE** efforts by the legislature to not fully fund the state housing trust funds for affordable housing programs.

## Vacation Rentals

**OPPOSE** policies that would preempt a local government's ability to have local ordinances related to vacation rentals.

## No-Discharge Zones

**SUPPORT** policies that create or establish No-Discharge Zones along the Indian River Lagoon, prohibiting boats from discharging treated or untreated sewage into the County's waterbodies.

## Sebastian River Improvement District

The Sebastian River Improvement District's (SRID) purpose is to provide drainage and flood protection for Indian River County residents within their boundaries. The County is aware that SRID recently met or will meet the conditions of a financial emergency pursuant to Section 218.503, Florida Statutes.

Indian River County BCC will **MONITOR** SRID's process of determining a financial emergency to ensure residents and tax payers are not negatively impacted.

# Concerns



## Finance and Tax Policies



### Millage Rates

**OPPOSE** policies that will negatively change the formula for calculating a local government's maximum millage rate; and **OPPOSE** policies that prohibit local governments from redeeming earned rolled back credits.

### Communications Service Tax

**SUPPORT** policies that (1) modernize the Communication Service Tax in a manner that is revenue neutral; (2) simplify administration and collection of the tax; (3) provide for a broad and equitable tax base; provide for enhanced stability and reliability; and (4) provide the opportunity for market-based application.

### Shared Revenue Sources

**SUPPORT** policies that consider impacts to the state revenues shared with counties for the provision of local services; and **OPPOSE** permanent modifications to state shared revenue sources or related funding formulas that would significantly impact the counties' ability to continue to fund local services.

### Tax Reform

**SUPPORT** tax reform measures that simplify administration, enhance effectiveness to meet current and future public service demands, and provide an economic boost to Florida's taxpayers while at the same time consider and minimize the collective and cumulative negative impacts on local revenues.

### Local Preemption on Business Regulation and Taxes

**OPPOSE** policies that would remove the authority for counties and municipalities to increase business tax rates or to impose additional business taxes in the future.

# Concerns



## Finance and Tax Policies Continued



### Local Government Fiscal Responsibility

**OPPOSE** policies that would negatively impact the collection of ad valorem taxes and other revenue sources.

### Constitutional Officers

**SUPPORT** policies that provide adequate state funding for constitutionally prescribed county officers that are required to perform duties on behalf of the State of Florida; and **SUPPORT** an increase in transparency for Constitutional Officers' cost of providing services to taxpayers.

### Tourist Development Tax

**OPPOSE** policies that mandate tourist development funds be diverted away from local communities, or impair the County's use of the funds for local tourist development.

### Fuel Taxes

**SUPPORT** indexing local option fuel taxes to annual adjustments of the Consumer Price Index.

### County Funding of Court-Related Costs and Judicial Responsibilities

**SUPPORT** policies to remove the automatic 1.5% increase in funding for Court related functions; **SUPPORT** policies to increase funding for service fees charged for recording documents and instruments to adequately fund the Court; and **OPPOSE** the use of local revenue sources to fund the State of Florida's judicial responsibilities.

# Concerns



## Administration Policies



### Local Government Accountability and Transparency

**SUPPORT** policies that promote the provision of accurate and accessible administrative and fiscal public information in a manner that is fiscally responsible, publicly comprehensible, technologically efficient, and that does not constrain the effective administration of local services.

### Local Government Administration

**SUPPORT** policies related to retirement, workers' compensation and other administrative systems based on sound and accurate data analyzed with consideration for state and local fiscal impact, fairness and accessibility for state and local employees, as well as, predictability and stability relative to market forces for the long-term effective management of state and local financial plans.

### State of Emergency

**OPPOSE** policies that would inhibit the County's ability to provide services to the community immediately following a natural disaster including, but not limited to, employment policies.

# Concerns



## Health, Human Services and Public Safety Policies



### Medicaid Services

**SUPPORT** policies to establish a 3% cap on growth in the individual county Medicaid costs under s. 409.915, F.S., **SUPPORT** the provision determining the rate of overall growth of the County Medicaid cost share be maintained at 50% and not be changed to 100% of the rate of growth in the State Medicaid expenditures; and **OPPOSE** efforts to further shift state Medicaid costs to counties.

### Coverage For Emergency Services

**OPPOSE** policies that would negatively impact the Indian River County Emergency Services District's ability to be reimbursed for providing advance life services and basic life services to patients who have out-of-network providers.

### Medical Examiners

**OPPOSE** policies that prohibit medical examiners from charging a fee for examination and autopsy services that a medical examiner is required to perform by law for cremation services.

### First Responders

**SUPPORT** the use of Critical Incident Stress Management Plans to assist first responders with psychological traumas including post-traumatic stress syndrome.

### Housing Assistance

**OPPOSE** policies that require the establishment of a local government risk mitigation program.

### Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN)

**OPPOSE** policies relating to COPCNs which would negatively impact the County's Emergency Services District's ability to provide services.

### School Resource Officers

**SUPPORT** the creation of a new dedicated and recurring statutory funding source to fully fund School Resources Officers (SRO) positions in all public schools.

# Concerns



## Environmental Resources and Water Policies



### Fracking

**OPPOSE** state preemption of fracking activities; **OPPOSE** policies that create a public records exemption for proprietary information provided by drilling companies to the FDEP through FDEP's online chemical disclosure registry; and **SUPPORT** the ability of local governments to adopt local moratoriums on all new well stimulation activities, including hydraulic fracturing and acidization.

### Septic to Sewer

**SUPPORT** continued funding for septic to sewer conversions to include all of the communities along the Indian River Lagoon.

### Derelict Vessels

**SUPPORT** policies that would streamline the process to remove derelict vessels from the waterways of the State of Florida; and **SUPPORT** revised statutory authority and continued state funding for the enforcement and removal of derelict vessels, with emphasis on chronic offenders.

### Green Space Funds

**SUPPORT** policies that add conservation lands to the list of greenspace areas eligible for funding related to management and the removal of exotic and nuisance native vegetation.

# Concerns



## Growth Management and Infrastructure Policies



### Growth Management

**OPPOSE** policies that would require local governments to incorporate additional goals, objectives, policies or elements into its comprehensive plan.

### Florida Building Commission

**SUPPORT** policies that promote a fair and balanced Florida Building Commission which includes members from all of the industries regulated by the Florida Building Code, and **OPPOSE** policies that seek to limit the representatives on the Florida Building Commission.

### Impact Fees

**OPPOSE** policies that would prohibit the collection of impact fees no earlier than the issuance of the certificate of occupancy or otherwise negatively impact the County's ability to use impact fees for infrastructure costs.

### Municipal Service Areas

**SUPPORT** policies that provide where a county has, by ordinance, established one or more utility service areas in the unincorporated area and where the county has the current ability to provide service, a municipality may not provide utility services within such county service area(s) without consent of the county.

### Historic Dodgertown

**OPPOSE** policies that would (1) inhibit the County's ownership rights or ability to use the Historic Dodgertown or (2) negatively impact the County's bonds associated with the Historic Dodgertown.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



**Susan Adams**  
Commissioner  
District 1



**Joseph E. Flescher**  
Chairman  
District 2



**Joe Earman**  
Commissioner  
District 3



**Peter D. O'Bryan**  
Vice-Chairman  
District 4



**Laura Moss**  
Commissioner  
District 5

## ADMINISTRATION

**Jason Brown**  
County Administrator

**Kathleen Keenan**  
Legislative Affairs and  
Communications Manager

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