

JUNE 07, 2022
ITEM 14.A.1

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of County Commissioners

DATE: June 01, 2022

SUBJECT: Request for Board to give direction to staff to work with City of Vero Beach (COVB) and Town of Indian River Shores (IRS) on establishing “Anchoring Limitation areas” in the Indian River Lagoon.

FROM: Peter D. O’Bryan, Chairman
Commissioner, District 4

Discussion Item: The 2021 Legislature passed a bill, 327.4108, which allows counties to establish “Anchoring Limitation Areas” (ALA), which limits a live aboard boater to a maximum of 45 days within the ALA. Over the last several years more and more live aboard boaters have been anchoring up in the lagoon outside of the Vero Beach marina. The area to the south of the Barber Bridge and on the western lagoon shoreline, and within the channels of the Lost Tree Islands, have had dozens of boats anchored up for extended periods. Since they are outside the COVB marina limits, they are not serviced by the COVB pump out boat, so they end up discharging into the lagoon. While most boats have the Coast Guard approved marine sanitation device (MSD), these only treat for bacteria and E. Coli, and do not treat for N and P nutrient loads. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recently conducted Operation “Leaky Bottom” in Brevard and Indian River counties. Law enforcement officers from 10 agencies conducted foot patrols checking vessels at marinas and water patrols focused on moored or anchored vessels. Officers performed 241 vessel inspections resulting in 94 warnings and 56 citations, many for MSD violations (29). Nine vessel owners were cited for actively dumping waste into the water, and 20 more found with unsecured “Y” valves (raw sewage can be discharged directly into the water).

Ideally the ALA would incentivize vessels to moor within the COVB marina, thereby being serviced by the marina pump out boat. In addition, the ALA would allow the county to act faster on derelict or abandoned vessels.

I have had preliminary discussion with Mayors Brackett and Foley and initial reaction has been positive. Obviously both councils would also need to vote to approve moving forward with ALA.

Recommendation: I respectfully request the Board give direction to staff to work with City of Vero Beach (COVB) and Town of Indian River Shores (IRS) on establishing “Anchoring Limitation areas” in the Indian River Lagoon.

Backup Attached: Letter from Clean Water Coalition
Copy of FSS §327.4108
Email from Jessica Crawford (FWC) re: “Leaky Bottom”