



2023 State Legislative Program

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





OUTLINE

2023 Florida Legislative Session

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Important Dates

2022

Tuesday, November 22

Organizational Session

Wednesday November 30 - Friday, December 2

**FL Assoc. of Counties, Legislative Conference
Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront**

Monday, December 12 – Friday, December 16

Special Session

2023

Tuesday, January 3 – Friday, January 6

Committee Meetings

Tuesday, January 17 – Friday, January 20

Committee Meetings

Monday, January 23 – Friday, January 27

Committee Meetings

Monday, February 6 – Friday, February 10

Committee Meetings

Monday, February 13 – Friday, February 17

Committee Meetings

Monday, February 20 – Friday, February 24

Committee Meetings

Tuesday, March 7

Regular Legislative Session Convenes

Wednesday, March 14 – 16

**Chamber of Commerce Legislative Day (15th)
Host Hotel: Doubletree Downtown Tallahassee**

Wednesday, March 15

**FL Assoc. of Counties, Legislative Day
FSU Turnbull Conference Day – Tallahassee**

Friday, May 5

Final Day of Session

2023 Florida Legislative Session



The 2023 Florida Legislative Session will convene in Tallahassee, on Tuesday, March 7, 2023 and will run through Friday, May 5, 2023



Indian River County's State Delegation



Senator
Erin Grall
District 29



Representative
Robert Brackett
District 34



Guiding Principles

Overarching principles guide the State Legislative Program for Indian River County (IRC).

Support - County Home Rule. The Indian River County BCC supports maintaining the integrity of county home rule power, both administrative and fiscal, and views this authority conferred to Florida counties by Article VII, Section 1(f) and 1(g) of the Florida Constitution (1968), and by section 125.01, Florida Statutes, as vital to developing and implementing community-based solutions to local problems.

Oppose - Preemptive Legislation. The Indian River County BCC opposes any effort to preempt locally elected officials from making fiscal and public policy decisions on behalf of the citizens they represent.

Oppose - Unfunded Mandates. The Indian River County BCC opposes any legislation or any other proposal that would shift costs for providing services, programs or benefits from the state to the Local level, without concurrence by the impacted local government.

Oppose - One Size Fits All" Solutions. The Indian River County BCC opposes any proposed solutions that add or shift costs from the State to the Local level.

Support - The Indian River County BCC supports the guiding principles established by the Small County Coalition, and the Florida Association of Counties.



State Appropriation Requests

Project Description with Costs

8th Street Stormwater Treatment & Storage Area (Located along the Lateral C Canal at 8th Street & 74th Avenue)

- ⇒ State Requested Funds - \$1,875,000 (30%)
- ⇒ Total Project Costs - \$6,250,000

Indian River County Emergency Operations Center Expansion

- ⇒ State Requested Funds - \$2,610,000 (30%)
- ⇒ Total Project Costs - \$8,700,000

Indian River County Traffic Operations Center

- ⇒ State Requested Funds - \$1,125,000 (25%)
- ⇒ Total Project Costs - \$4,500,000

District 19 Medical Examiner Facility

- ⇒ State Requested Funds - \$1,000,000



8th Street Stormwater Treatment & Storage Area
(Located along the Lateral C Canal at 8th Street & 74th Avenue)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Construct a water storage/pollutant removal system (stormwater park) on an unimproved 38.35- acre parcel, owned by the County, located at 7205 8th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32968. The primary goal of the proposed system is to improve water quality in the Indian River Lagoon by addressing the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) identified in the Central Indian River Lagoon’s Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP).

The conceptual design calls for construction of a water storage/treatment pond on the former agricultural property. A portion of the stormwater flow from the Indian River Farms Water Control District (IRFWCD) Lateral C drainage canal will be diverted into the created pond for storage and treatment prior to ultimate discharge into the Lagoon. Utilizing a constructed pump station, stormwater from the Lateral C canal will be brought onto site where aquatic vegetation will be used to naturally uptake phosphorus and nitrogen, lowering the concentrations before returning the water by controlled releases back to the canals before finally discharging into the Lagoon.

The pond will also function as a storage pond during heavy rain events with water released during drier times, reducing the pulse discharges to the Lagoon.



Vicinity Map

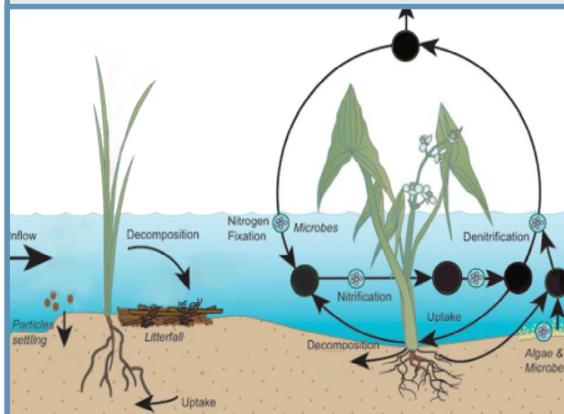


Conceptual Layout

Benefits

Reduction of pollutant loading to the Indian River Lagoon (consistent with FDEP type projects favorable for their environmental benefits).

Flexibility in management of pulsed discharges to the Lagoon. Ability to hold water in the storage pond during heavy rain events, and actively manage the pond’s levels and the timing of releases back to the network of canals, reducing potential impacts to the Lagoon.



Total Project Cost
\$6,250,000
Appropriations Request
\$1,875,000 (30%)



Indian River County - Natural Resources
8th Street Parcel Stormwater Facility
Project Exhibit



Emergency Operations Center Expansion

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Construction of a 10,000 square-foot, two-story addition to the existing single-story Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located at 4225 43rd Avenue, Vero Beach, FL, 32967. The current facility, constructed between 2006-2007, is significantly undersized for the County's growing population and increased emergency response needs.

The EOC renovation/expansion will occur on the north side of the existing facility. It will be constructed using the latest Florida Hurricane Building Codes to ensure the resiliency of the investment into the future.

The expansion will include facilities and bunk rooms necessary for overnight operations and communications during storm and other emergency events.

Benefits

The County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) provides dispatch/response/recovery during emergency events for a population of 161,000. The added construction will provide a centralized location for Emergency Management Services (EMS) management and staff, training areas, and safe storage for critical Fire Rescue personnel's equipment. The construction addition provides for expanded EOC operations capability during the preparation, response (during onslaught) and recovery stages of emergency events. The ability to co-locate County staff and essential partners staff during an emergency event greatly increases the efficiency of response and recovery.

This project contributes to the "National Preparedness Goal" as outlined by FEMA. Training facilities, and increased response and recovery times impact efficiencies of resources regionally as all resources are pooled during declared disasters.



Total Project Cost

\$8,700,000

Appropriations Request

\$2,610,000 (30%)



Traffic Operations Center

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a construction project which will include demolition of an existing facility built prior to the adoption of Florida Hurricane Building codes for wind speeds.

Requested dollars are anticipated to cover demolition of the existing facility and construction of the protective, hardened facility. Demolition and rebuild is preferred over relocation because this site is in close proximity to the existing Emergency Operations Center.

This project is construction ready with the local match identified.

Benefits

The new facility will allow for multi-jurisdictional traffic control system efficiently following an emergency/disaster event. Further, the project will enhance the protection of tax payers invested dollars in equipment that provides for county-wide traffic signaling and coordination, central monitoring, increased signal efficiency, reduced traffic congestion and increased safety. A hardened building will allow for the pre-staging of equipment necessary for the rapid response and will optimize the Traffic Team's ability to deploy such equipment and staff following an emergency event.



Total Project Cost
\$4,500,000
Appropriations Request
\$1,125,000
(25%)



Medical Examiner Facility

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Planning and design funding (\$1,000,000) for a new District 19 Medical Examiner Facility to be located on the Indian River State College main campus in Ft. Pierce, Florida. Currently the Medical Examiner operates in leased space, built in the 1970s and located on the Indian River State College main campus. The current facility has been deemed beyond rehabilitation.

The match for this request is proposed to be jointly shared by four counties: St. Lucie, Martin, Okeechobee and Indian River.

The combined cost share commitment is based on the percentage of use. Based on the percentage of use, each county's financial commitment equals approximately \$265,250. Additionally, Indian River State College Board of Trustees has agreed to provide a long-term lease of two acres of Trustee owned land for the new facility.

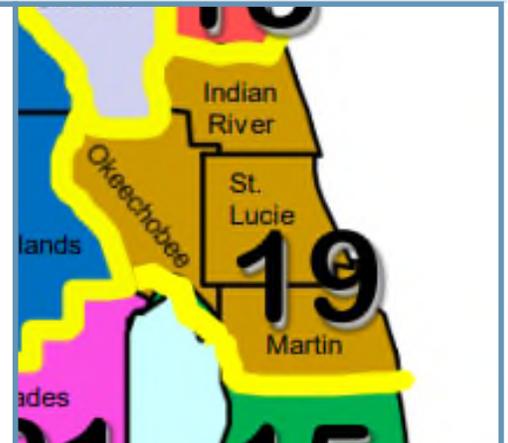
Benefits

The District 19 Medical Examiner building is not only dilapidated creating health and safety issues, the space is undersized for this region's existing and growing population. A newly constructed and modernized facility will substantial upgrade service to citizens in this region, providing dignity to the deceased and their families. It will also better assist the State Attorney's Office in their criminal prosecution and ensure timely determinations in accordance with Florida Statute Chapter 406.

Funding assistance with the planning and design of a new District 19 Medical Examiner Facility is timely and critical to the expedition of a newly constructed facility on the land designated by the College.



Total Project Cost
\$1,000,000





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 to implement projects 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.

Indian River County Center Tracking Station



After Hurricane Ian



After Hurricane Nicole

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 increased flexibility in sources of local 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.



Relative 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).

OPPOSE efforts by the legislature to not fully fund the state housing trust fund 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 in the Indian River Lagoon, prohibiting boats from discharging treated or untreated sewage into the County's waterbodies.

Concerns



Finance and Tax Policies



Millage Rates

OPPOSE policies that will negatively change the formula for calculating a local government's maximum millage rate;

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; (4) ensure enhanced stability and reliability; and (5) 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.

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.

Local Government Fiscal Responsibility

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

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.

SUPPORT an increase in transparency for Constitutional Officer's 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

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 pursuant to s. 28.24(12)(e), F.S., from \$4.00 to \$8.00, so that \$6.00 of the fee is distributed to county commissions to help fund court-related technology and technology needs as mandated by s. 29.008(1)(f)(2), F.S.

Funding Judicial Responsibilities

OPPOSE the use of local revenue sources to fund the State of Florida's judicial responsibilities.

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.

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 which 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.

Emergency Shelters– Reimbursements

SUPPORT policy changes that allow school boards, municipalities, or other emergency sheltering entities to directly seek reimbursement from FEMA for emergency sheltering.

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.

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

SUPPORT policies that facilitate local government access to disaster relief funding.

OPPOSE policies that would hinder the County's ability to provide services to the community immediately following a natural disaster.

Concerns



Environmental Resources and Water Policies



Septic to Sewer

SUPPORT an Indian River Lagoon and Caloosahatchee River 50/50 grant matching program in support of 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.

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 green-space areas eligible for funding related to management and the removal of exotic and nuisance native vegetation.

Concerns



Environmental Resources and Water 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.

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.

Jackie Robinson Training Complex (JRTC)

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



INDIAN RIVER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



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Commissioner
District 1



Joseph E. Flescher
Commissioner
District 2



Joe Earman
Vice-Chairman
District 3



Deryl Loar
Commissioner
District 4



Laura Moss
Commissioner
District 5

ADMINISTRATION

Jason Brown
County Administrator

Kathy Copeland
Legislative Affairs and
Communications Manager

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