

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA
BOARD MEMORANDUM**

CONSENT

TO: Board of County Commissioners

THROUGH: John A. Titkanich, Jr., County Administrator

THROUGH: Eric Charest, Interim Natural Resources Director

SUBJECT: Authorization for Staff to pursue unexpended balances in the FDEP's Hurricane Restoration Reimbursement Grant Program

DATE: May 15, 2024

DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS

The Hurricane Restoration Reimbursement Grant Program (HRRGP) was instated following Hurricanes Ian and Nicole as a mechanism to financially assist private homeowners living in coastal impacted areas recover costs associated with certain qualifying coastal protection activities. The law was implemented following the December 2022 Special Session, with revised language added during the 2023 Florida Legislative Session. An additional revision to the law has been drawn up again and awaits the Governor's signature that would allow for unutilized funds within the program to be made available to local governments in areas most impacted by the storms for large scale sand placement events. Indian River County is listed as a County eligible for this program.

Beginning July 1, 2024, identified local governments may apply for funds under HRRGP to for eligible costs associated with large scale sand placement projects constructed to protect upland infrastructure and provide benefits to property owners at large. Funding allotted under this program will be awarded on a first come, first served basis, and not require any cost-share matching from the applicant. A stipulation of the HRRGP requires that a project receiving funds under the program would need to be completed by July 2025.

Indian River County has pursued and obtained a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Joint Coastal Permit (JCP) for a dune renourishment event within its' Beach Management Sector 4 (Sector 4), with the associated US Army Corps of Engineers permit having been received in draft form. As such, the County is on track to move forward with a scheduled Dune Renourishment Event within Sector 4 beginning in November 2024 and completing in April 2025.

It is estimated that the Sector 4 Dune Renourishment event will place approximately 135,000 cubic yards of beach compatible sand into the dune system along nearly 2.9 miles of Atlantic coastline with a construction cost of approximately \$6,400,000. To date, the County has secured funding from the FDEP and from the Florida Division of Emergency Management in the amount of \$4,376,000, with the remaining balance to be made up from the Coastal Engineering Fund.

As the funding available under the HRRGP is available on a first come, first served basis, with the program opening for applications on July 1, 2024, and with the County's planned Sector 4 Dune Renourishment event scheduled to take place within the timeframe requirements contained within the grant, Staff is seeking approval from the Board to prepare and submit a HRRGP Grant application for those costs associated with the Sector 4 project that currently would be borne solely by the County.

FUNDING

As funding sources have already been identified for the planned Sector 4 Dune Renourishment event, additional funding is not required to apply for this grant.

RECOMMENDATION

Pending Governor approval on the revised language contained within HRRGP making local governments eligible for unexpended funds, the recommendation of staff is for the Board of County Commissioners to authorize Staff to apply for HRRGP funding for Sector 4 as soon as the application window opens.

APPROVED AGENDA ITEM FOR: June 4, 2024