



Meeting Date

September 7, 2017

**AGENDA REPORT**

*BREVARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS*

SUBJECT:	Support letter for Senator Mayfield proposal to provide a continuous matching fund stream for Counties and Municipalities for septic to sewer conversion.
DEPT/OFFICE:	District 4 Office

Requested Action:

It is requested that the Board of County Commissioners approve the attached letter and authorize the Chairman or Vice Chairman to sign and send to Senator Mayfield prior to her meeting with the Governor on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Summary Explanation & Background:

There is a coordinated effort on the part of several Florida legislative members and Indian River Lagoon organizations to get a bill passed in the coming legislative session that would provide a continuous matching fund stream for counties and municipalities for septic to sewer conversions for several years' time. On September 11th, Debbie Mayfield is scheduled to meet with the Governor and staff. She intends to make this proposal at that time and needs support letters from local organizations. Here are some facts that might help you write a letter of support for this funding. Senator Mayfield's address is: <[mayfield.debbie.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:mayfield.debbie.web@flsenate.gov)>

- In the Indian River Lagoon drainage basin alone, there are over 300,000 septic tanks leaching into the lagoon
- All of Florida estuaries, springs and rivers are threatened by poor water quality due to nutrient overload
- There are approximately 2.8 million septic tanks in Florida
- A Florida Health Department study completed in 2015, showed that older (those with less than 2 feet separation between the drain field and groundwater) septic systems remove 0% of nitrogen from the effluent. Newer systems only remove 30% of the Nitrogen from the effluent.
- In addition to nutrient pollution, septic systems add other pollutants to our waters - chemical from cleaning products, pharmaceuticals, bacteria and viruses.

The combination of Florida's sandy soil and high water table are a bad combination. We need to preserve our precious water resources for human consumption, wildlife and recreation. It is vital for Florida's economy. Local governments need state matching fund to retroactively correct early state laws that permitted septic tanks in inappropriate locations.

**POC:**

Pat Woodard, 633-2044  
[patrick.woodard@brevardfl.gov](mailto:patrick.woodard@brevardfl.gov)

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Exhibits Attached: Draft Letter of Support

Contract /Agreement (If attached): Reviewed by County Attorney Yes  No  PR

County Manager	Assistant County Manager John Denninghoff	Department Director / Extension
Frank Abbate	Interim Assistant County Manager Jim Liesenfelt	

September 7, 2017

Honorable Rick Scott, Governor  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Honorable Scott:

As you are aware, the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) continues to suffer from harmful algal blooms that have contributed to distressing losses of seagrass habitat, fish kills, and unusual mortality events of dolphins, manatees and shorebirds. Excess nutrients fuel these harmful algal blooms. Improperly sited, constructed or maintained septic systems are a significant contributing source of excess nutrients impairing water quality in the IRL. Projects that convert septic to sewer are needed but they are costly to local communities and property owners.

We write to request your support of a state matching fund for septic to sewer conversions in communities along the IRL. In Brevard County, we have approximately 60,000 septic systems that contribute nitrogen, pathogenic, and pharmaceutical pollution to groundwater that migrates to the IRL. We have used state-recommended models to identify and prioritize the septic systems that pose the greatest risk to IRL health. In November, our citizens voted to impose upon themselves an infrastructure sales tax to help fund removal of the highest priority neighborhoods and upgrades for isolated systems, but this local funding is not enough to address the needs of the IRL.

It is imperative that we move swiftly to remove the worst systems and convert them to sewer. We have begun with 2 sewer service expansion projects currently under construction and 4 more neighborhoods in design and permitting. We have dozens more neighborhoods prioritized but waiting for funding. We request a dedicated source of state matching funds to assist us protect not only human health and a marine ecosystem of national significance, but also an important facet Florida's economy that depends so heavily on tourism, fishing and recreation on our waters.

We deeply appreciate your efforts to act in favor of providing sustained funding to assist us in bringing the IRL back to good health and ensuring a prosperous future to our region of Florida.

Sincerely

Curt Smith, Chairman  
Brevard County Commissioner, District 4

CC: Senator Debbie Mayfield  
Board of County Commissioner