MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members

From: Staff

Date: December 11, 2015 Council Meeting

Subject: Council’s 2016 Legislative Priorities

Background

At its January 17, 2014 meeting, Council established the Gubernatorial Committee to annually create a legislative priorities list for the Treasure Coast Region and to improve Council’s relationship with the Governor and Florida lawmakers. This year the Gubernatorial Committee has been meeting monthly since March 20, 2015 to create and refine a draft legislative priorities list for 2016. The Committee made a special effort this year to focus on specific priorities that apply to the region as a whole.

Overview

Council’s regional legislative priorities for 2016 are focused on addressing two key regional issues: Restoring the Everglades and Eliminating Harmful Freshwater Discharges into the St. Lucie River Estuary and the Indian River and Lake Worth Lagoons. The Committee also established ten specific actions the legislature could direct in support of these priorities. This year the Committee created two documents that contain Council’s 2016 legislative priorities. The first includes a more comprehensive reporting of the priorities, providing background information on the Council, the legislature, the committee, and the creation of the priorities. The second is a one-page “leave-behind” document highlighting Council’s regional legislative priorities for 2016.

The Committee discussed the desire to send the draft legislative priorities document to some of Council’s partner organizations in order to get additional feedback. On October 26, 2015, Council staff transmitted the draft document to the following individuals and organizations requesting their comments:

- County Administrators
- Indian River County Chamber of Commerce
- Legislators for the Treasure Coast Region
- Local Business Development Boards
- Local Economic Councils
- National Estuaries Program – Indian River Lagoon Council
- Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation Executive Director
- St. Johns River and South Florida Water Management Districts
- Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments
- Treasure Coast Regional and Palm Beach League of Cities
Several comments were received suggesting changes to the draft document. These include: combining the action statements dealing with increasing water storage in and around the region; wordsmithing action statements to be more succinct; and perhaps elevating the action statement dealing with adequately funding Basin Management Action Plans higher up on the priorities list.

In addition, Council was a host organization for the Joint Professional Societies Annual Legislative Breakfast for the Treasure Coast Region. This annual event was well-attended and is focused on legislators from the four-county Treasure Coast Region. Vice-Chairman Michael Davis was in attendance and spoke in support of Council and its draft legislative priorities.

Conclusion

It is Council’s mission to provide visionary leadership and advocacy on behalf of local governments to preserve the quality of the region’s economic, natural, built, and social environment. It is Council’s responsibility to: 1) provide an efficient mechanism for addressing problems that can only be addressed by collaborative effort and cooperation between local governments; and 2) help assure that state goals and objectives (the top down part of planning) are achieved in a manner that is appropriate given local and regional needs and conditions (the bottom up part of planning). Council’s mission and its ability to carry out its “bottom-up” planning and advocacy responsibilities are furthered by the development of a legislative priorities list for the region. This mission would also be furthered by having our 19 legislative delegates representing the Treasure Coast collaborate on certain issues as a region.

Recommendation

Council should: 1) approve the Gubernatorial Committee to finalize the 2016 legislative priorities for distribution and sharing with all interested and involved parties in the state and region; and 2) authorize the Gubernatorial Committee to work over the next few months to monitor legislative activities and further refine Council’s legislative priorities.

Attachments
# Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
## Gubernatorial Committee

**Gubernatorial Appointees**
- Councilmember Steven Weaver, Sr. **(Chair)** (St. Lucie County)
- Councilmember Reece Parrish (St. Lucie County)
- Councilmember Michael Davis (Palm Beach County)
- Councilmember Peter Sachs (Palm Beach County)
- Councilmember Kelly Smallridge (Palm Beach County)
- Councilmember Mark Llano (Palm Beach County)
- Councilmember Tobin Overdorf (Martin County)
- Councilmember Michael Houston (Martin County)
- Councilmember Douglas Bournique (Indian River County)

**Elected Officials**
- Commissioner Paula Lewis (St. Lucie County)
- Councilman Bruce Guyton (City of Riviera Beach) (Palm Beach County)
- Vice Mayor Jerome Adams (City of Sebastian) (Indian River County)
- Commissioner Ed Fielding (Martin County)
2016 Legislative Priorities

Restore the Everglades and Eliminate Harmful Freshwater Discharges into the St. Lucie River Estuary and Indian River and Lake Worth Lagoons

Legislative Initiatives in Support of these Priorities Include:

- significantly increasing the long-term use of Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Amendment 1) monies for Everglades restoration, including bonding these monies;
- restoring historic flows south to Everglades National Park;
- creating significant additional storage in the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie River/Indian River Lagoon Estuary basins;
- establishing water management system interconnections between the St. Johns River Water Management District and South Florida Water Management District beneficial to Everglades and regional estuary restoration, and protection of the Region's water supply;
- creating significant additional storage in the Northern and Southern Everglades;
- adequately funding local government efforts to comply with Total Maximum Load regulations and targets contained in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Basin Management Action Plans;
- supporting local and regional efforts to increase water storage, aquifer recharge and the health and longevity of the Region's ground and surface fresh water supply;
- better managing Lake Okeechobee and improving the Herbert Hoover Dike;
- increasing freshwater flows to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River; and
- increase funding for and reduce the cost of converting coastal septic systems to central sewer systems and provide incentives for property owners and local governments to encourage conversions.

For additional information:

Michael J. Busha, AICP
Executive Director, TCRPC
421 SW Camden Avenue
Stuart, Florida 34994
772-221-4060
mbusha@tcrpc.org
The Gubernatorial Committee of the TCRPC was created to address critical concerns within the member counties which comprise the region. It is composed of at least one local elected delegate from each county (Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River), and the Gubernatorial Appointees to the Council.

The legislative priorities of the TCRPC's membership and other regional stakeholders were reviewed. The Committee's intentions were to identify those issues truly affecting the region as a whole and those that might be more effectively addressed by a collaborative effort and cooperation between local governments of the region speaking with one collective voice. These issues would then become legislative priorities for the region.

This year the Committee chose to focus on advocating for solutions to our critical regional water resource issues.

"I believe in the power of cooperation and that we are never stronger than when we pool our resources for the betterment of our regional community.

Serving as Chairman for this committee has allowed me to see first-hand that although we come from different counties with unique perspectives, we embrace many of the same critical issues that affect the quality of life in our communities and our region.

One of our most pressing and ongoing common concerns is water resource management, to include drinking water supply, agricultural water, water farming, Everglades and aquifer protection and restoration, and flood control. These elements are all interrelated to some degree and are certainly common to all local governments within the Treasure Coast Region, and beyond.

The resource and expertise of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council affords us a greater opportunity to work collectively and promote regionally." The challenge has been identified. Let's work together towards offering and implementing solutions.

Steven M. Weaver Sr.
RESTORATION OF THE REGION’S RIVERS, ESTUARIES, AND WATERBODIES

Background

The Indian River Lagoon, Lake Worth Lagoon, St. Lucie River and Estuary and the Loxahatchee River exist within a six-county area (Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, Brevard, and Volusia) along the southeast and east central coasts of Florida. Even though considered significantly impaired, these riverine and estuarine systems together are still recognized as the most diverse in North America with an estimated annual economic value worth billions of dollars. Concerns about these rivers and estuaries include: too much or not enough freshwater input, degradation of seagrass and other benthic habitats, reduction of oyster and fish populations, total nitrogen and total phosphorus loading, algal blooms, and abnormal mortality in large sea mammal and bird populations.

The Governor’s 2015-16 budget proposed using the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Amendment 1) monies as an ongoing source of revenue for Everglades restoration intended to eliminate funding interruptions that have impeded Everglades restoration in the past. The Governor’s 20-year plan proposed $5 billion in state funding and $4 billion in anticipated matching funds from the federal government, for a total of $9 billion. The latest estimate to complete all projects listed in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is $19.6 billion. This includes the $2.1 billion to carry out the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) which represents a series of projects specifically designed to allow more water to be directed south into Everglades National Park.

Established in 2015, the Land Acquisition Trust Fund could generate between $750,000 to $1 billion a year over the next 19 years. As provided by law these monies shall only be expended to finance or refinance the acquisition and improvement of land, water areas, and related property interests, including conservation easement, and resources for conservation lands including wetland, forests, and fish and wildlife habitat; wildlife management areas; lands that protect water resources and drinking water sources, including lands protecting the water quality and quantity of rivers, lakes, streams, springsheds, and lands providing recharge for groundwater and aquifer systems; lands in the Everglade Agricultural Area and the Everglades Protection Area, as defined in Article II, Section 7(b); beaches and shores; outdoor recreation lands, including recreational trails, parks, and urban open space; rural landscapes; working farms and ranches; historic or geologic sites; together with management, restoration of natural system, and enhancement of public access or recreational enjoyment of conservation lands.

In addition, leakage from coastal septic sewage systems has been suggested as a contributing factor to the current poor health of the Indian River Lagoon and St. Lucie River Estuary. Within the counties of Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie there are about 120,000 private septic systems. Brevard, Volusia, and Palm Beach counties share the same issue. Many local and state political leaders in the region have expressed some desire to eventually get the most troublesome coastal septic tank areas onto public sewer systems. The cost of switching from septic tanks to public sewer systems may be prohibitive for individual counties and property owners.
SUPPORT: Actions to restore the Everglades and eliminate harmful freshwater discharges into the St. Lucie River Estuary and Indian River and Lake Worth Lagoons.

Examples of initiatives in support of this priority include:

1. significantly increasing the long-term use of Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Amendment 1) monies for Everglades restoration, including bonding these monies

2. restoring historic flows south to Everglades National Park

3. creating significant additional storage in the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie River/Indian River Lagoon Estuary basins

4. establishing water management system interconnections between the St. Johns River Water Management District and South Florida Water Management District beneficial to Everglades and regional estuary restoration, and protection of the Regions water supply

5. creating significant additional storage in the Northern and Southern Everglades

6. adequately funding local government efforts to comply with Total Maximum Daily Load regulations and targets contained in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Basin Management Action Plans

7. supporting local and regional efforts to increase water storage, aquifer recharge and the health and longevity of the Region’s ground and surface fresh water supply

8. better managing Lake Okeechobee and improving the Herbert Hoover Dike

9. increasing freshwater flows to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River

10. increase funding for and reduce the cost of converting coastal septic systems to central sewer systems and that provides incentives for property owners and local governments to encourage conversions.

Accomplishing these initiatives will require a strong and lasting State and Federal partnership, as well as local government and citizen support and patience. Concern has been expressed that the strength of this partnership has diminished over the years. It is the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council’s desire and expectation that efforts be made on both sides to revive and strengthen this partnership. Restoration of the Everglades and the Region’s estuaries cannot be accomplished without it.
## Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
### Gubernatorial Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</tr>
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*Note: The document contains various contact information for the committee members, including phone numbers and email addresses.*
## Florida House and Senate Treasure Coast Delegation

### The Florida House of Representatives (Treasure Coast Delegates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<tr>
<td>Berman, Lori</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hager, Bill</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Bill.hager@myfloridahouse.gov">Bill.hager@myfloridahouse.gov</a> 561 470-6607</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harrell, Gayle</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Gayle.harrell@myfloridahouse.gov">Gayle.harrell@myfloridahouse.gov</a> 772 871-7660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerner, Dave</td>
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<td>Lee, Jr. Larry</td>
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<td>Magar, Marylynn</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>Mayfield, Debbie</td>
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<td>Pafford, Mark</td>
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The Florida Senate  
(Treasure Coast Delegates)

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<tr>
<th>Senator</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Counties/Contact</th>
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</table>
| Abruzzo, Joseph | 25       | Democrat | Part of Palm Beach County  
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| Clemens, Jeff | 27       | Democrat | Part of Palm Beach County  
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  St. Lucie counties  
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| Negron, Joe   | 32       | Republican | Parts of Indian River, Martin, Palm  
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| Sachs, Maria Lorts | 34 | Democrat | Parts of Broward, Palm Beach  
  counties  
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Key 2015-2016 Legislative Session Dates

- September 16 – November 30, 2015: Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
- January 12, 2016: Regular Session Begins
- March 11, 2016: Regular Session Ends
About the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) was created by and for local government. It serves four counties – Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties and their 50 municipalities. Formed in 1976 by an interlocal agreement pursuant to Florida Statutes Chapter 163, it is one of 10 regional planning councils statewide dedicated to serving its local governments.

TCRPC is governed by a 28-member Board. Two-thirds are elected officials and one-third are gubernatorial appointees.

TCRPC cost-effectively offers a wide scope of award-winning services and programs to its local governments including: economic development and community redevelopment initiatives; brownfields cleanup and assessment services; first-responder training, and emergency management planning and exercise assistance; transportation planning assistance; grant-writing and management; and energy conservation and community resilience planning assistance.

The TCRPC is committed to continuing its regional initiatives in support of shared visions, values and goals.

Our Mission

To be a dynamic regional forum for local government, providing visionary leadership, advocacy, and coordination between counties and local, state, and federal governmental agencies to solve common problems and preserve and enhance the quality of the region’s economic, natural, built, and social environment.

For additional information:

Michael J. Busha, AICP
Executive Director

Peter G. Merritt, Ph.D.
Assistant Director

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admin@tcrpc.org

Palm Beach • Martin • St. Lucie • Indian River
2016 Legislative Priorities
COMMENTS RECEIVED

Business Development Board of Palm Beach County, Inc.
Indian River County Board of County Commissioners
Indian River Lagoon Council
Palm Beach County Water Utilities
South Florida Water Management District
Mike Busha

From: Kelly Smallridge <ksmallridge@bdb.org>
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2015 2:59 PM
To: Mike Busha
Subject: RE: 2016 Legislative Priorities for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

Dear Mike,
I do not necessarily have any changes to the document as it heavily focuses on water. Just as an FYI - we work very closely with the Economic Council and County and have formed a special alliance with Danny Martell and Todd Bonlarron to advocate for our economic development priorities. While water is one of them, there are several others but it’s good to have the TCRPC hand out for further background as we walk the floors of Tallahassee.

Kelly Smallridge
President & CEO
Business Development Board
of Palm Beach County, Inc.
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ksmallridge@bdb.org
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From: Mike Busha [mailto:mbusha@tcrpc.org]
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2015 6:26 PM
To: Kelly Smallridge <ksmallridge@bdb.org>
Subject: 2016 Legislative Priorities for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

Dear Kelly,

Attached please find Council’s draft 2016 Legislative Priorities. Please review for consistency with your own legislative priorities and let Council know if there are any changes you would like it to consider.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Busha, AICP
Executive Director
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Avenue
Stuart, FL 34994
(772) 221-4060
November 16, 2015

Michael J. Busha, AICP
Executive Director
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Avenue
Stuart, Florida 34994

RE: 2016 Legislative Priorities for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

Dear Mr. Busha:

On October 26, 2015, you sent me a letter concerning the 2016 Legislative Priorities for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. On November 13, 2015, the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners ("Board") considered the 2016 Legislative Priorities for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and voted 4-1 to set one priority instead of having ten individual priorities.

The Board determined that the one priority should be adequately funding local government efforts to comply with Total Maximum Daily Load regulations and targets contained in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Basin Management Action Plans. It was mentioned at the Board meeting that this priority incorporates that last priority on the list, which was to increase funding for and reduce the cost of converting coastal septic systems to central sewer systems and provide incentives for property owners and local governments to encourage conversions. Finally, it was mentioned that the focus should be on local communities deciding their priorities and how to address them.

Sincerely,

Dylan Reingold
County Attorney

cc: Indian River County Board of County Commissioners
Joseph A. Baird, County Administrator
Kate Cotner, Assistant County Attorney
Michael:

Thanks for the invitation, but I can’t do it that day. We have an IRL Council meeting same day.

Sorry - a bit late on this response. I didn’t get much feedback from IRL Council members re: your draft 2016 Legislative Priorities document. I polled them individually. Lack of response suggests that most are OK with the list.

Here are some general feedback comments…

- Wordsmith bullets to be more succinct
- Consider adding a bullet to support continued state funding for the IRL Council and IRL NEP.
- Recognize that Amendment 1 and bonding are hot political issues

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Cheers,
Duane

Duane De Freese, Ph.D.
Executive Director, IRL Council
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Hi Michael,

I do apologize, as I meant to forward this along to you earlier. I went through the priorities and noticed that they were environmental and/or water related, so I forwarded your email along to our Palm Beach County Water Utilities expert. He provided the below information:

The priorities are very general in nature and a couple could stand to be combined given the number of times that storage is mentioned. The one bullet I would like to see would be an emphasis utilizing Amendment 1 monies on multi-faceted projects that provide water supply, quality and climate change benefits utilizing cooperative efforts involving local governments and private stakeholders instead of continuing to rely on money going to and projects being executed by the SFWMD under the confines of the federal CERP process.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

All the best,

Rachael

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I noticed that all of the items are water related. Do you have any comments you'd like to provide?

Thanks,

Rachael

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Dear Rachael,

Attached please find Council's draft 2016 Legislative Priorities. Please review for consistency with your own legislative priorities and let Council know if there are any changes you would like it to consider.
Sincerely,

Michael J. Busha, AICP
Executive Director
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Avenue
Stuart, FL 34994
(772) 221-4060

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Good Morning Mr. Busha,

Thank you for contacting the South Florida Water Management District regarding the local environmental initiatives supported by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. The SFWMD is in full support of the Governor’s 2016-17 Florida First Budget, which invests $3.5 billion in funding for the environment, agriculture and natural resources. The Governor’s proposal includes $63 million for Florida Forever and the purchase of new land; $151 million for Everglades restoration; $50 million for springs protection; and more than $50 million for projects to improve the quality of our water.

If your initiatives are approved by the legislature and are in alignment with our agency’s core mission to provide flood control and protect the water resources of the region, we stand ready to provide the technical support needed to complete your projects.

Best Regards,

Tia Barnett
Intergovernmental Representative
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406
(561) 682-6286 - Office
(561) 880-7091 - Cell
tbarnett@sfwmd.gov

We value your opinion. Please take a few minutes to share your comments on the service you received from the District by clicking on this link.