



2014

PALM BEACH COUNTY STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES



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PALM BEACH COUNTY

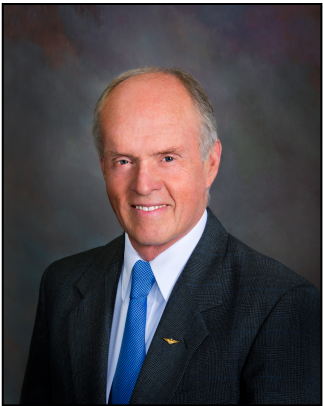
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

GLADES REGIONAL INITIATIVES

In an effort to provide economic growth and stimulus to the region surrounding Lake Okeechobee, Palm Beach County has identified several legislative issues that will provide economic development and job creation to the area. Among the issues are:

- Funding for Road Reconstruction and Repaving
- Redevelopment of the Glades Correctional Institution site
- Support the expansion of workforce development efforts
- Support improvements to existing affordable housing units as well as the development of new affordable housing units
- Torrey Island Master Plan funding of \$75,000 for the redevelopment of this site into a marine resort focused on the ecotourism market.
- Economic Development Incentive and Transportation funding for the Glades Region Inland Port
- Support reauthorization of the Enterprise Zone in the Glades

EXPANSION OF GAMING AT PARI-MUTUEL FACILITIES

In 2004, voters of the state passed an amendment that paved the way for expansion of gambling at pari-mutuel facilities in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. Since that time, gambling facilities at several locations throughout the state have been allowed to expand their operations. The ability for these facilities to expand their operation has placed Palm Beach County pari-mutuels at an unfair competitive disadvantage. Legislation may prevent Palm Beach facilities from being able to expand gaming to compete with existing and future gambling facilities in Miami-Dade and Broward County. This could result in the demise of the Palm Beach Kennel Club, a local business that employs 624 people and attracts over 750,000 people a year.

In November 2012, voters in Palm Beach County approved a ballot question asking voters if they would like to allow slot machines in existing pari-mutuel facilities.

Oppose legislation that would place Palm Beach County pari-mutuel facilities at an unfair competitive disadvantage as it relates to the expansion of gambling in the state and support legislation providing for the inclusion of slot machines in Palm Beach County pari-mutual facilities.

FILM AND TELEVISION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Florida's Entertainment Industry Incentive Program is a performance-based program that has been a huge success - creating thousands of new jobs for Florida workers, bringing substantial new money to our local communities and spawning financial investment throughout the state.

During the 2012 legislative session, Florida's Entertainment Industry Incentive program was allocated an additional \$42 million in tax credits and extended an additional year.

During the 2013 legislative session, Florida's Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive program was not allocated additional tax credits and there are presently no tax credits available in the program through FY 2015/2016.

In order to ensure the continued success of Florida's Entertainment Industry Incentive program, we need the Legislature to support:

1. Additional funding for the remaining fiscal years of program - the tax credits allocated to the program are completely certified and Florida is turning away or losing projects due to lack of adequate funding for the program;
2. Additional long-term commitment to the program in the form of an additional 4-7 years or no sunset - this will encourage more long-term investment and growth;
3. Adequate funding for the Office of Film & Entertainment so the office can continue to properly oversee, administer and market this tremendously successful program;
4. Contract with Film Florida to create a public-private partnership that will provide consistent leadership for Florida's entertainment production industries by 1.) marketing the State's industry resources; 2.) aligning and building the State's regional industry clusters and ; 3.) insuring that steps are being taken to protect Florida's investment in the entertainment production industries.

SCRIPPS AND BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH FUNDING

Current statute allows for a percentage of cigarette tax revenues to be deposited into the Alcoholic Beverage and Tobacco Trust Fund. One percent of those tax revenues is then placed into the Biomedical Research Trust Fund in the Department of Health for the purpose of establishing activities and grant opportunities in relation to biomedical research. Those funds have been solely appropriated to Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute.

Scripps Research Institute has acquired top-rated scientists to assist with the continued research of tobacco, its effects and treatment of this addiction. Support an increase in the percentage of cigarette tax net collections that will be deposited into the Biomedical Research Trust Fund or a direct appropriation of \$3 million per year, to enhance biotechnology research within the state. Efforts should be made to continue to enhance the Trust Fund to allow other research institutes to compete for funding.

BUDGET & TAXATION POLICY

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

UNFUNDED MANDATES/MEDICAID COST SHIFTS

The State Legislature has frequently passed legislation that compels local governments to provide a service, program, or benefit without providing the appropriate funding or a funding source. This compromises local governments' ability to provide services requested by their local communities by diverting resources to these state-directed, unfunded mandates or cost shifts. In addition, as more and more mandates are created, local governments are faced with the burden of using local tax dollars to finance functions that they have little control over.

The state must do a better job of truthfully identifying costs to local governments when passing new legislation and must provide funding or a funding source for every legislative initiative that imposes a cost on counties. Palm Beach County opposes new unfunded mandates and unfunded state to county cost shifts.

ARTICLE V

The State should allow for the expansion of the \$65 mandatory court fee to be applied to civil cases in addition to the already allowed criminal cases. This fee would allow for additional revenue to fund the state court system. The County supports the continuation and enhancement of the \$2.00 recording fee to be distributed to counties to fund court-related technology needs. Palm Beach supports full funding for statewide traffic hearing officer programs.

Under existing law, counties are required to increase funding for courts by 1.5% a year. The Legislature has created year-to-year reprieves from this requirement during the 2010-2012 sessions. This reprieve should be extended again for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. Under current economic conditions where local governments have been reducing funding levels across the board, this requirement may lead to fiscal difficulties for local governments; therefore, the funding increase mandate should be eliminated.

INTERNET SALES TAX

Palm Beach County supports clarifying and enforcing the existing law relating to the collection of sales tax on taxable items purchased via Internet. Currently, individuals in the State of Florida are obligated to pay taxes on goods purchased online. The burden lies on *the individual* to remit to the Department of Revenue the tax incurred for online purchases unlike "brick and mortar" businesses where *the business* is required to collect and remit to the state. The Legislature should clarify law to require all businesses to collect and remit appropriate sales tax on goods purchased online. Additionally, the Federal Government should enact provisions that allow for the interstate collection and remittance of sales taxes paid on taxable goods that are purchased from businesses in said states.

ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURAL RESOURCES

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

LAKE REGION WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS \$1,000,000

Water Infrastructure for the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay (the Glades Cities) suffers from a history of poor design, faulty construction utilizing improper material and a severe lack of investment for replacement and refurbishment. As a result, the Glades Cities historically struggled to provide adequate pressure during both average daily flow and maximum daily flow conditions. Provision of adequate fire flow pressure during maximum daily flow conditions has also been difficult due to the significant deterioration of the existing water mains. Additionally, there is considerable piping within the Glades Cities that is undersized and requires replacement. The continued deterioration of the water infrastructure eventually led to threats to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Glades Cities and the absorption of the responsibilities of water and wastewater delivery by the Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department (PBCWUD). A suite of Water Infrastructure Improvement Projects (Projects) are required in order to repair and restore the water infrastructure of the Glades Cities and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public and businesses within the Glades communities. Implementation of the Projects will additionally improve the economic development outlook in the Glades Cities. The total cost for the Projects is in excess of \$50 million and will require several years to complete. PBCWUD has initially committed to an investment of \$25 million over five years at a rate of \$5 million per annum and requests allocations of \$1.0 million annually from the Legislature over the same timeframe.

| | FY 2013-2014 Funding Request | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Project Name | Estimated Project Cost | Requested State Allocation |
| Water Main South Extension – City of Belle Glade | \$3.25 million | |
| Southwest Belle Glade Water Main and Water Services Replacement Project – ZONE 1 | \$2.5 million | |
| Total Project Cost | \$5.75 million | \$1 million |

Water Main South extension – PBCWUD has determined that the addition of larger diameter water main pipes will improve the service level and system reliability of the Belle Glade area.

Zone 1 Water Main and Services – PBCWUD has determined that the SW residential area of Belle Glade is in an area of heightened importance for the improvement of water infrastructure. PBCWUD has divided the area into four priority zones based on the severity of need for improvement of water service delivery and fire

protection. Zone 1 has been assigned the highest priority given its history of numerous water service line failures due to breaks, leaks, aged and undersized pipes and lack of proper infrastructure replacement and refurbishment.

LAKE WORTH LAGOON INITIATIVE \$2,075,000

The Lake Worth Lagoon estuary stretches 20 miles along the shores of 13 municipalities from North Palm Beach to Boynton Beach and has been subjected to pollution and habitat losses for decades. Palm Beach County, the South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the League of Cities have endorsed a plan to restore the Lagoon. This plan includes restoration of sea grasses and mangroves, capping of muck and construction of storm water control projects. Revitalizing this important water body provides long-term environmental, recreational and economic benefits to the region.

The Initiative provides a cost-share program to local governments for projects to benefit the Lagoon. Funding is allocated through the Lake Worth Lagoon Partnership Grant Program, which provides a competitive process for selection of viable restoration and water quality projects. Each State dollar is matched at the local level on a minimum 50:50 cost-share basis. Through this program, over \$17 million in State funds and \$59 million in local funds have been dedicated to restoring the Lagoon. Since 2009, only \$150,000 in State appropriations has been received for this program.

LWL Funding Requests for Fiscal Year 2014

| FY 2014 LWLI FUNDING REQUESTS | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Project Name | Grant Funding Request | Local Match | Estimated Project Cost |
| 1 | Peanut Island Reef Complex in Riviera Beach | \$75,000 | \$75,000 | \$150,000 |
| 2 | Palm Beach Grassy Flats Restoration | \$900,000 | \$900,000 | \$1,800,000 |
| 3 | Bryant Park & Steinhardt Cove Living Shorelines in the City of Lake Worth | \$400,000 | \$400,000 | \$800,000 |
| 4 | West Palm Beach Currie Park Living Shoreline | \$300,000 | \$300,000 | \$600,000 |
| 5 | Monitoring and Administration | \$400,000 | \$400,000 | \$800,000 |
| | TOTAL | \$2,075,000 | \$2,075,000 | \$,150,000 |
| | | | | |

BEACH AND INLET MANAGEMENT PROJECT APPROPRIATIONS: \$16,860,950

Florida's beaches are the focus of our tourism industry and their role in providing upland property protection against storm damage makes them key components of our economy. State matching grants are a critical component of the funding required to maintain this essential infrastructure. Through the Shoreline Protection Program, Palm Beach County provides publicly accessible beaches, helps maintain the tourist-based economy and protects upland property. A dedicated source of funding for beach and inlet management projects was established in 1998 from the documentary stamp tax revenue. The Legislature established intent to appropriate \$30 million annually in documentary stamp tax revenues to the Ecosystem Management and Restoration Trust Fund for beach preservation and repair. However, budgetary restrictions reduced this amount significantly over the past few years, forcing many communities to advance the necessary funding for projects in anticipation of future reimbursements. In the FY 2013, budget allocations were returned close to the funding levels outlined in statute (\$26.7 million) and focused on matching federal appropriations, but the backlog of reimbursement allocation continues. The County is requesting inclusion of the following Palm Beach County shore protection projects in the State's Fiscal Year 2014 Beach Erosion Control Program:

B&IMP Funding Requests for Fiscal Year 2014

| FY 2014 Beach & Inlet Management FUNDING REQUESTS | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| No. | Project Name | Grant Funding Request | Local Match | Estimated Project Cost |
| 1 | Coral Cove Park Dune Restoration | \$470,000 | \$470,000 | \$940,000 |
| 2 | Jupiter/Carlin Shore Protection | \$125,000 | 125,000 | \$250,000 |
| 3 | Juno Beach Shore Protection | \$375,000 | \$375,000 | \$750,000 |
| 4 | Singer Island Shore Protection Project | \$639,120 | \$960,880 | \$1,600,000 |
| 5 | Central Palm Beach County Erosion Control Project | \$190,000 | \$190,000 | \$380,000 |
| 6 | South Lake Worth Inlet Mgmt | \$536,250 | \$178,750 | \$715,000 |
| 7 | Ocean Ridge Shore Protection | \$46,200 | \$46,200 | *\$200,000 |
| 8 | Delray Beach Renourishment | \$1,100,000 | \$1,100,000 | \$ 2,200,000 |
| 9 | Boca Raton North Beach Shore Protection | \$ 1,672,450 | \$1,672,450 | \$3,344,900 |
| 10 | Boca Raton Central Beach Shore Protection | \$3,887,900 | \$5,460,300 | \$9,348,200 |
| 11 | Boca Raton South Beach Shore Protection | \$1,478,200 | \$1,544,700 | \$3,022,900 |
| 12 | Boca Raton Inlet | \$254,000 | \$254,000 | \$508,000 |
| 13 | Midtown Beach Restoration | \$540,885 | \$731,422 | \$2,743,410 |
| 14 | Phipps Park Restoration | \$5,545,945 | \$10,828,267 | \$17,630,072 |
| TOTAL | | \$16,860,950 | \$23,936,969 | \$40,797,919 |

*includes federal funding

FRESHWATER LAKE RESTORATION \$1,255,000

Freshwater lakes within Palm Beach County include the Chain of Lakes system, covering 30 miles from West Palm Beach to Delray Beach to include five lakes: Pine, Clarke, Osborne, Eden and Ida, as well as a significant portion of the 730 square mile Lake Okeechobee. A Chain of Lakes Management Plan was approved by the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to provide fish and wildlife habitat along the lake shorelines, improve water quality, reduce stormwater discharges, and promote public outreach and education. Projects completed under this Plan, and with State appropriations, include creation of over one mile of shoreline habitat, restoration of over 40 acres of high quality wetlands, and dredging over 200,000 cubic yards of muck sediments. State grants, along with matching local funding, will be utilized for nutrient removal and water quality improvements. A new focus on Lake Okeechobee includes efforts to restore native wetlands habitat that would enhance fisheries and wildlife utilization. This current State appropriations request includes \$50,000 for the 640-acre Torrey Island that lies within the southeastern portion of the Lake. Since 2009, no State appropriations have been received for freshwater restoration.

FLF Funding Requests for Fiscal Year 2014

| FY 2014 COL and Lake Okeechobee FUNDING REQUESTS | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Project Name | Grant Funding Request | Local Match | Estimated Project Cost |
| 1 | Lake Clarke Septic Impact Study | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$200,000 |
| 2 | Muck Dredging/Capping Project | \$1,000,000 | \$1,000,000 | \$2,000,000 |
| 3 | Monitoring and Administration | \$105,000 | \$105,000 | \$210,000 |
| 4 | Torrey Island Wetlands Restoration | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$100,000 |
| | | \$1,255,000 | \$1,255,000 | \$2,510,000 |

ESTUARINE RESTORATION \$650,000

Over 270 miles of estuarine shoreline begin just south of Martin County and extend down through Boca Raton, excluding Lake Worth Lagoon. A recent Estuarine Enhancement Project Assessment Study introduces 56 potential projects including mangrove wetland and creation, rip rap shoreline stabilization, seagrass and oyster bed creation, hydrologic flushing improvements, upland hammock restoration and artificial reef projects. Similar to the Lake Worth Lagoon Plan, the projects were evaluated and assigned priority designations. Two projects have been selected in our request to the State for funding that will require \$650,000 in State funds matched 50:50 with local funding.

Estuarine Funding Requests for Fiscal Year 2014

| FY 2014 Estuarine FUNDING REQUESTS | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | Project Name | Grant Funding Request | Local Match | Estimated Project Cost |
| 1 | Earman River Living Shorelines | \$300,000 | \$300,000 | \$600,000 |
| 2 | Highland Beach Mangrove Shoreline Restoration | \$350,000 | \$350,000 | \$700,000 |
| | | \$650,000 | \$650,000 | \$1,300,000 |

RENEWABLE ENERGY/ SOUTH FLORIDA CLIMATE CHANGE COMPACT

As an ongoing effort to develop and collaborate regionally on energy/climate issues, the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact Counties of Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Monroe and municipal partners renew support for the 2012 Southeast Florida Regional State and Federal Climate Legislative Program. Palm Beach County affirms support for the following state legislative policies *for 2014*.

2014 State Policies:

Adaptation Action Areas/Sea Level Rise:

OPPOSE any infringement on local home rule authority to plan for and adapt to future climate conditions, including sea level rise, precipitation patterns, and temperatures.

SUPPORT greater incorporation of adaptation strategies in state climate/energy policies, legislation, and appropriations priorities.

SUPPORT legislation, programs, and funding that support local governments' adaptation activities, including the establishment and use of Adaptation Action Areas.

SUPPORT legislation and policies requiring state agencies, water manage and industries regulated by the state (e.g. electric utilities) to consider projected sea-level rise and potential storm surge in all infrastructure and facility-siting decisions.

Offshore Oil Drilling

OPPOSE - efforts to lift the ban on oil drilling within Florida's territorial waters as described in Palm Beach County Ordinance No. 2010-1071.

Energy:

SUPPORT integrated resource planning/least cost planning for electric utilities to ensure that energy efficiency and renewable energy sources are fully considered as strategies for meeting future needs.

SUPPORT energy efficiency and renewable energy finance options to advance greenhouse gas emissions goals, alternative and renewable energy technologies, and green sector economic development.

SUPPORT stringent energy efficiency and conservation targets set by the Florida Public Service Commission pursuant to the Florida Energy Efficiency & Conservation Act, as amended.

SUPPORT rebate programs, tax credits, and other financial incentives that encourage property owners to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems.

SUPPORT renewable portfolio standards (RPS) for utilities that would require a set percentage of electricity to be generated from renewable energy sources by a given date.

SUPPORT legislation requiring natural gas companies to reduce the amount of “lost and unaccounted-for” gas.

Water

SUPPORT returning Water Management Districts’ authority, taxing powers, and budgetary control to the situation that existed prior to 2010.

Everglades:

SUPPORT legislation and funding supporting complete implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan and policies recognizing that a restored Everglades will help make the region more resilient to sea level rise and extreme weather events.

Investment Priorities:

SUPPORT funding for adaptation planning and no-regrets investments in water management, water supply, conservation land acquisition, transportation, and other infrastructure that provide hazard mitigation and improve immediate and long-term resilience.

SUPPORT prioritized funding for infrastructure investments in Adaptation Action Areas, or other areas subject to the impacts of sea level rise.

SUPPORT funding for the Water Protection and Sustainability Program.

Transportation:

SUPPORT development of electrical vehicle infrastructure, including statewide policies to streamline siting and permitting of electrical vehicle charging stations, siting of charging infrastructure on state property, and inclusion of electric vehicle models and specifications in the state contract system.

SUPPORT legislation that encourages the design, completion, or expansion of integrated networks of non-motorized transportation corridors (such as bike lanes) on a local and/or regional level.

SUPPORT legislation that would provide additional local transit connectivity to existing and proposed regional transit systems (“first and last mile strategy”).

SUPPORT legislation that supports planning and implementation of transit-oriented developments (tods) on a local and/or regional scale.

SUPPORT ISSUES

LOXAHATCHEE RIVER PRESERVATION INITIATIVE \$2,186,785

BACKGROUND: The Loxahatchee River is the southernmost tributary of the Indian River Lagoon and includes the North Fork of the Loxahatchee River, one of two nationally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in Florida. Despite its Federal designation as a Wild and Scenic River and the protective status associated with classification as an Outstanding Florida Water, significant problems with the River need to be addressed. Development in the River's watershed has altered much of the natural flow of the River and water quality concerns are widespread. Within the Wild and Scenic portion of the River, virtually all of the cypress trees in the lowermost segment have been killed by the upstream movement of saltwater. This condition is the direct result of hydrologic alterations of the watershed that have reduced the volume of freshwater to the River.

The Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative is the outgrowth of a watershed management effort started by the FDEP in 1996. A multi-agency and community-based coalition, the Loxahatchee River Watershed Planning Committee was created to define and evaluate the status of the entire watershed and propose actions that would improve and protect the natural resources within the watershed.

Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative Fiscal Year 2015 Projects

| Rank | | Legislative | | Local Match |
|-------|--|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Order | Project Name | Funding | Local Sponsor | Funds |
| | | Request | | |
| 1 | Loxahatchee River Neighborhood Sewering Project (Jupiter Inlet Colony) | \$600,000 | Loxahatchee River District | \$1,800,000 |
| 2 | Kitching Creek Central Flowway Wetland Restoration | \$150,000 | Martin County BCC | \$150,000 |
| 3 | Loxahatchee River Water Quality Monitoring Project | \$50,000 | Loxahatchee River District | \$100,000 |
| 4 | North Jupiter Flatwoods Restoration Phase II | \$375,000 | Palm Beach County ERM | \$375,000 |
| 5 | Jonathan Dickinson State Park Hydrological Restoration | \$125,000 | Jonathan Dickinson State Park | \$125,000 |
| 6 | Cypress Creek Habitat Restoration Project | \$200,000 | Palm Beach County ERM | \$250,000 |
| 7 | Pine Gardens North and South Water Quality Improvements | \$200,000 | Town of Jupiter | \$220,000 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 8 | JID Mangrove Island Restoration | \$190,000 | Jupiter Inlet District | \$190,000 |
| 9 | Parkway Street Water Quality Improvements | \$68,250 | Town of Jupiter | \$68,250 |
| 10 | Jones and Sims Creek Water Quality Master Plan | \$28,535 | Town of Jupiter | \$28,535 |
| 11 | Non-native Plant Removal, JDSP – Lower North Fork | \$200,000 | Jonathan Dickinson State Park | \$200,000 |
| Totals | | \$2,186,785 | | \$3,506,785 |

EVERGLADES RESTORATION AND FLORIDA FOREVER: \$100 MILLION FOR EVERGLADES RESTORATION AND SUPPORT FUNDING FOR FLORIDA FOREVER

Issue 1: Support \$100 Million in Everglades Restoration Funding

The County strongly supports the State \$100 million as part of Everglades Restoration, particularly those that are ready for work to commence and located in Palm Beach County. The County also supports the State's efforts to persuade the Federal government to allocate additional funds for Everglades Restoration.

Issue 2: Continued and Additional Florida Forever Funding

The Florida Forever Program, which replaced the Preservation 2000 Conservation Lands Acquisition Program, is the blueprint for conservation of the State's natural resources. The Florida Forever program has not been consistently funded by the Legislature over the past few years, which has setback both state and local government efforts to preserve the natural resources and environmentally sensitive lands within the state. To continue with the goals set forth by the Florida Forever Act, consistent funding of the program is essential.

Issue 3: Funding for Land Management

The Florida Forever Program focuses solely on funding for the acquisition of conservation lands, but once lands have been acquired and the opportunity for acquisition decreases, agencies must turn their attention to management of the acquired lands. The County would like to see an additional category of funding that focuses on the management of these State-owned conservation lands that are managed by local governments, either a flat fee or a percentage of the management costs. In order for agencies to continue to protect environmentally significant lands, protect ground and surface water, provide recreational activities, and implement local comprehensive plans, funding sources must be provided to assist in the management of these lands.

S-155 CONTROL STRUCTURE RECONFIGURATION

The S155 tidal gate discharges stormwater from the C-51 canal to the Lake Worth Lagoon. It is the largest such structure with the highest discharge volume along the Lagoon.

The stormwater discharges also carry suspended sediments that settle out as muck over the natural shelly-sand substrate of the Lagoon. Muck sediments are easily resuspended, reducing needed light penetration to nearby seagrasses. Sediments coat natural benthic and oyster habitat, leaving large areas devoid of sea life.

Within two miles of the structure, 1.2 million cubic yards of muck has accumulated (~.9cm/yr). Significant federal, state and local funding is being expended to cap the sediment and restore the habitat, but continued discharge must be restricted in order for these projects to remain successful.

A muck trap, built just upstream in concert with Palm Beach County and the City of West Palm Beach, is able to accumulate ~150 tons/year, but the canal carries an average of 8,000 tons of sediment per year (USGS).

The existing S-155 structure discharges from its base. A modified structure could act as an additional muck trap, minimizing further degradation to the Lagoon's resources and dramatically reducing the cost of habitat restoration in the area.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION – BEACH FUNDING & PERMITTING

A Beach Management Working Group, formed pursuant to proviso language contained in the General Appropriations Act for FY 2008-9, was directed to review the state's beach management program and make recommendations for improvements. While a few of the recommendations were subsequently implemented and recent rule clarifications represent a significant step in improving the Department's efficiency, additional changes are necessary to streamline a program that is vital to both the state and local economies.

Recommendation: Encourage additional state beach program streamlining.

- With the reduction in federal, state and local funding availability for shoreline protection projects, the state's grant program should be adjusted to focus on reimbursement for completed rather than anticipated work.
- Eliminating redundancy in state and federal permit application review would reduce project costs, accelerate the permitting process and eliminate agency conflicts.

WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

As water and wastewater infrastructure ages, it becomes necessary to repair or replace aged components of the water infrastructure framework, as well as to integrate innovative technologies and approaches to provide high quality water and wastewater service. In its most recent Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, the United States Environmental Protection Agency Identified Significant infrastructure Repairs and Replacements that will be required in the decades ahead. The assessment identified nearly \$17 billion worth of upgrades needed in Florida. Provision of high quality water and wastewater provides basic building blocks for economic sustainability and advancement. Municipal and County Governments will require assistance from State and Federal sources to tackle these growing challenges. However, approximately 50% of the water project funding that was appropriated during the 2013 Legislative Session was vetoed. The County SUPPORTS funding for needed water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Additionally, the County SUPPORTS proposals for the provision of general funding for water resource development that is not targeted at specific project proposals.

REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY/AFFORDABILITY

In permitting large scale infrastructure projects and achieving compliance with a myriad of regulatory requirements, stakeholders often encounter situations in which resources and efforts are wasted due to the inflexibility of the requirements and inability to craft an approach that allows for the most efficient use of resources to address multi-faceted problems. It is necessary to ensure that, in permitting and regulatory decisions, state regulatory agencies consider the most cost effective solution to deal with regulatory or environmental compliance priorities. Components of the approach could include: identifying inefficiencies between competing requirements and providing flexibility to allow prioritization of projects as budgets allow, encouraging and providing funding support for innovative technological approaches to achieve compliance, utilizing limited resources to maximize larger community benefits, and encouraging regional cooperation (and public-private partnerships) to determine long term solutions. An example of this effort was the inclusion in the 2013 ocean outfall legislation of consideration of the technical and economic feasibility of achieving 60% reuse and total elimination of outfall discharges by 2025. The County SUPPORTS legislative and regulatory direction to encourage and require the prioritization of projects with an aim towards maximizing expected environmental outcomes.

ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLY FUNDING

In 2005, the State Legislature enacted the Water Protection & Sustainability Program, requiring the regional water supply planning function of the water management districts to promote alternative water supply projects and enhance the state's water supplies. At the beginning of each fiscal year revenues were to be distributed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection into the alternative water supply trust fund accounts created by each water management district. A total of \$100 Million was established in recurring funding. The funds were to be used to assist in funding alternative water supply construction costs selected by each District's Governing Board for priority implementation. In 2008, funding from the Water

Protection & Sustainability Program Trust Fund was reduced to \$7.7 Million statewide. Funding was further reduced in 2009 to only \$2.2 Million. Since 2009, the funding level has been zero.

SUPPORT enhancement of Florida's water resources by either restoring alternative water supply funding or creating a new statewide program to provide substantial and long-term funding to:

- Enhance regional and local water resource and supply capacity development
- Provide adequate and reliable long-term funding for municipal water infrastructure
- Provide funding for alternative water supply development
- Provide funding for water quality protection and treatment of impaired waters
- Establish a system for prioritizing Alternative Water Supply projects to ensure that funding is utilized in the most efficient manner available

ASSAULT ON UTILITY WORKERS

Currently, Florida Statutes provide for the reclassification of the misdemeanor or felony degree of specified assault and battery offenses when those offenses are knowingly committed against law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other specified persons engaged in the lawful performance of their duties. The effect of this reclassification is that the maximum penalty increases. Proposed legislation, as originally filed in previous sessions, would add utility workers (a term defined in the bill) to the list of specified persons. Therefore, the felony or misdemeanor degree of certain assault and battery offenses would be reclassified if committed against a utility worker engaged in the lawful performance of his or her duties in the same manner as if those offenses were committed against a law enforcement officer or firefighter engaged in the lawful performance of his or her duties. Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department has experienced an increase in incidents involving angry and disgruntled customers threatening employees. Since June 2012 there have been 3 cases of aggravated assault, 6 cases of threats against utility workers, and 1 case of criminal intent with illegal tampering. All presently were investigated as active case files by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

Support any legislation that would reclassify certain assault and battery offenses committed against a utility worker engaged in the lawful performance of their duties in the same manner as if those offenses were committed against a law enforcement officer engaged in the lawful performance of their duties.

SUSTAINABLE WATER USE PERMIT AND INCENTIVES

Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department (PBCWUD) considers water use permitting for the integration of multiple water sources for public purposes a critically important public issue. Under current law a consumptive use permit can only be issued, modified, or renewed for the amount of water required to meet a permittee's demonstrated need. However, this need may not always match the constructed infrastructure capacity. Supplemental to meeting resource demands, the implementation of aggressive conservation plans and the recent downward trend in the economy can lead to capital infrastructure investments that exceed current demands but lack the necessary authorized allocation. If a water management district was then to reduce the permitted allocation consistent with the decreased water need, this would strand a large portion of the utility's capital infrastructure investment. As the economy begins to

regain some of its previous momentum (that which was planned for as a part of the original allocation), those utilities located in resource restricted areas (about one-half of the state south of State Road 50), would have to develop expensive new alternative water supply sources to meet the renewed demand for water. This combination of stranded capital infrastructure and the premature development of alternative water supplies will create an unnecessary economic burden, which could impede or delay Florida's economic recovery. By extending the effective date of the consumptive use permit and allowing for the issuance of a single water use permit, which authorizes a utility to utilize and optimize water from multiple sources under a single permit, will, in most cases, promote efficiencies and best management practices, reduce costs for utilities, and assure the ability of public water supply utilities to meet public water supply demands under varying hydrologic conditions at all times.

Support any legislation that would include provisions to address the issuance of a single consumptive use permit by an applicant that derives its water from more than one source; thereby promoting efficiency and best management practices, reducing costs, and assuring the ability of applicants to meet their water supply demands under varying hydrologic conditions and at all times.

RECLAIMED WATER USE FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES

During the 2012 Legislative Session, there was an amendment proposed to a reclaimed water bill (HB 639) that would have allowed the use of reclaimed water on vegetable gardens for private residences in South Florida. The amendment died for lack of a sponsor. Current technology provides an opportunity to treat reclaimed wastewater to standards that would allow for its broad application and use for agriculture when that application and use is permitted in accordance with all public health requirements and environmental standards.

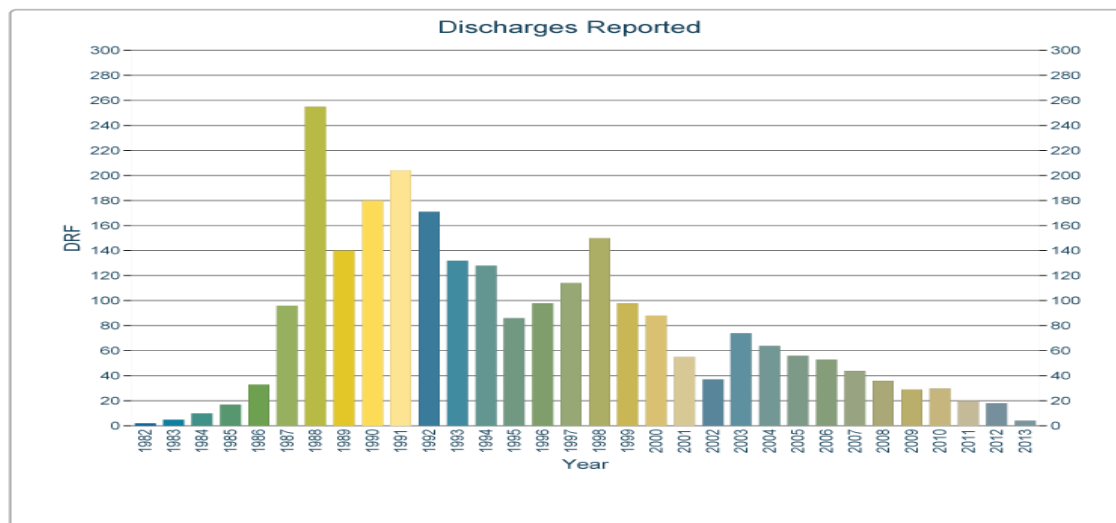
Support legislation that would recognize the broad application and use of reclaimed water for agricultural purposes, but only where the DEP and/or Department of Health concludes that its use is permissible and would not be considered a public health or safety concern.

MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STATE PETROLEUM CLEANUP PROGRAM

Palm Beach County's local petroleum cleanup program provides supervision of state contractors conducting assessment and remediation of petroleum contamination within the County. In addition, Palm Beach County's local program provides enforcement and oversight for non-eligible contamination cleanups. In 2002, 298 sites were assigned by FDEP for contamination cleanup in Palm Beach County and 65 contaminated sites were cleaned up. In 2012, 183 sites were assigned and 43 were cleaned up. The reduction in assigned sites is the result of Palm Beach County's successful efforts to clean up contaminated sites that are within FDEP's established priority funding range.

Recommendation: Encourage the FDEP to assign more sites to high performing counties by reducing the priority score funding range on a county-wide or regional basis. This will result in a significant increase in the number of contamination cleanups and reduce the state's backlog.

Contamination cleanups in Palm Beach County are overseen by an experienced local program staff who know the geological formations of Palm Beach County. The ability to maintain on-site observation and supervision of the many phases of the cleanup process is essential to conducting contamination cleanups in a timely and cost-effective manner. Palm Beach County has three licensed professional geologists and a specialized site technician who regularly visit contaminated sites and monitor the status of the remediation equipment. Without the participation of Palm Beach County the contamination cleanup process cease. If the petroleum contamination cleanup process is discontinued, the threat to local drinking water supplies will increase significantly.



It should be noted that local programs have accounted for an estimated 75% of the total number of sites cleaned up. Palm Beach County staff has supervised cleanup of approximately 50 sites per year since 1988.

MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE PETROLEUM STORAGE TANK COMPLIANCE LOCAL PROGRAMS

Since 1988 the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM) has contracted with the FDEP to administer the Petroleum Storage Tank Compliance Verification Program. During FY 2012-13, FDEP's compliance program budget remained at \$7,000,000, but this represents a 30% reduction since FY 2010-11. During 2012, FDEP decided to move towards a regional approach with the program and reached out to many of the high performing counties, including Palm Beach County, to expand their program territories. The result of FDEP's effort was Palm Beach County receiving approval to expand its program duties into Martin and St Lucie Counties. The recent budget reductions have resulted in facilities being inspected every other year instead of annually. The rationale behind this reduction was that all petroleum storage tank systems are now double walled and less likely to leak, therefore require less frequent inspections. The reality is:

- The requirement for double walled storage tank systems began in 1992 and many of the double-walled petroleum storage tank systems statewide are now more than 10 years old.
- Historical inspection records show that as petroleum storage tank systems age equipment failures and maintenance issues occur more frequently. These issues are only discovered by regular site inspections.
- Reduced inspection frequencies will likely decrease compliance rates and increase the chances for petroleum discharges as equipment failures and maintenance issues persist for longer periods before being discovered by inspectors.

Recommendation: Encourage the legislature to continue supporting the Petroleum Storage Tank Compliance Verification Program at the local program level and maintain the current \$7,000,000 budget level, or preferably, restore funding to the \$10,000,000 level which would result in all facilities being inspected annually instead of every other year. The Storage Tank Compliance Program provides the first line of defense for protecting the State's drinking water supplies and early detection of leaks prevents costly clean-up efforts by the property owner.

| COUNTY | # OF INSPECTED FACILITIES | # OF INSPECTED TANKS |
|------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| PALM BEACH | 1302 | 2,880 |
| ST. LUCIE | 361 | 797 |
| MARTIN | 234 | 395 |

Maintaining funding for the Petroleum Storage Tank Compliance Local Programs ensures a routine inspection of all the petroleum storage tank systems, reduces the chances for petroleum discharges, and provides the highest level of protection for the state's surface and groundwater.

FLORIDA RECREATION DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Within the Department of Environmental Protection, the Division of Recreation and Parks administers the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program. This program is a competitive grant program that provides financial assistance through grants to local governments for the acquisition and development of land for public outdoor recreation purposes. The maximum grant amount per development is \$200,000.

\$642,000 was provided to the State program in 2013/14. FRDAP was not funded during the 2012 Legislative Session. For FY 2010-2011, total statewide funding for FRDAP was \$300,000 and the Village of Royal Palm Beach received \$200,000 for their Village Commons Park, one of only two applications funded statewide. In FY 2008-2009, funding was \$24 million and funded 212 projects in 54 counties. The

County recommends restoring FRDAP funding to levels that at least funds the top twenty projects in The Large Project Development list.

Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation submitted two FRDAP applications for the coming year:

- Improvements at John Prince Park (Mound Circle Area Improvements) totaling \$200,000
- Improvements at Okeeheelee Park South (Trails, Boating Center) totaling \$200,000.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FLOOD PREVENTION

In response to unprecedented rainfall in the central areas of Palm Beach County, more than a foot of water flooded parts of Wellington, the Acreage, and areas served by the Indian Trail Improvement District. In the 2013 session, \$4 million was allocated to improve the J.W. Corbett Levee System to help improve water drainage and flow in the region. Palm Beach County supports efforts of the South Florida Water Management District, local flood control districts, and residential associations to secure the remaining financial resources to enhance drainage in these communities.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Growth management laws should take careful consideration of and protect the distinct home rule authority of local governments. **Support** changes that 1) strengthen the intergovernmental review process, 2) ensure that the development impacts occurring outside the approving jurisdiction are adequately mitigated, 3) eliminate unnecessary duplication and expenses, and 4) **Support** full funding of regional planning councils and **Oppose** legislation prohibiting or restricting the ability of a regional planning council to provide planning and technical service to its local governments. Efforts to strengthen intergovernmental coordination should be considered so that land use decisions of one jurisdiction do not negatively impact another.

Additionally, current law requires “proportionate share” payments **only for the first project** to take a road segment from under capacity to an over capacity situation. Amend state law to require **any** project impacting an over capacity road to contribute an amount equal to their impact/use of the capacity they are absorbing.

RAIL SERVICE ON THE FEC CORRIDOR

The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) and other local governments and MPOs have been working together to reintroduce passenger service, via Amtrak, on 326 miles of the FEC railway between Jacksonville and Miami. According to Florida

Department of Transportation estimates, the project will create 2,100 jobs in three years; generate long-term revenues of more than \$2 billion in land development; and provide improved mobility and environmental benefits.

The Florida Department of Transportation submitted a federal funding application for the Amtrak/FEC Corridor project to the Federal Railroad Administration in August 2010. The project is now in the running for a requested \$250 Million to complete the project in three years. Continue to support \$118 million in State allocated funds in the DOT work plan for this transit project.

Private interests at All Aboard Florida have also proposed a passenger rail train on the FEC to link Miami to Orlando with stops in Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach. Continue efforts to work with the State and company representatives to ensure funding is provided for safety measures and quiet zones at all railroad crossings.

Additionally, connectivity between the CSX and FEC rail lines has been proposed in the West Palm Beach area. Work with DOT officials to ensure connection of the line that will ultimately allow for the expansion of Tri-Rail north to Jupiter.

DMV FACILITY SERVICE/MOUNTS BOTANICAL GARDENS

Currently, the Department of Motor Vehicles licensing building is located on a parcel of land that sits on the northeast corner of Mounts Botanical Gardens. The Gardens exist to support the educational mission of the Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service whose office is adjacent to the Garden and the DMV facility. The Garden has extensive collections of native and exotic trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses that are used for teaching, display, research and conservation.

In 1991, a design team was asked to prepare a master plan, which was revised in 2004, for the Botanical Gardens that would enable it to expand and be used as an important teaching and research arm for the agricultural community. Under this plan, the current site of the DMV office would become an integral part of the future Education Center.

Support continued DMV service expansion that could lead to the future integration of the Military Trail DMV Office to the Mounts Botanical Gardens Master Plan. The Legislature should also continue to encourage the Department to work with local Tax Collectors to provide additional DMV locations for expanded service.

PUBLIC SAFETY

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

REGIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER & JUVENILE ASSESSMENT CENTER REPLACEMENT

The current West Palm Beach Regional Juvenile Detention Center is more than 30 years old and was described in last year's DJJ Capital Improvement Plan as being a hazard. Palm Beach County supports the complete replacement of the facility, including both the detention center and the attached juvenile assessment center; however, given a lack of momentum in replacing detention centers, the County strongly supports the requested maintenance and repair projects totaling over \$800,000 for FY2014/2015, including roof replacement, toilet replacements, and lexan window replacements.

ADJUSTMENT TO THE STATE/COUNTY SHARED DETENTION CENTER COST SPLIT

Florida Statute Section 985.686 requires counties to contribute funds to the state to cover the cost of youth detained in secure detention for those stays when a youth is awaiting disposition of charges or "predisposition" days. The current utilization rate split is 76% County funds and 24% state funds. The Department of Juvenile Justice is requesting a change to the utilization rate to 32% County funds and 68% state funds, per their interpretation of a recent First District Court of Appeal decision.

Palm Beach County supports legislation that codifies the financial responsibility of juvenile secure decision as upheld by Florida's courts.

SOBER HOMES

Sober Houses or Recovery Residences, have been an issue for many local residential communities, including single family neighborhoods. The majority of these Sober Homes are privately owned and operated by one individual or non-profit organization. During the 2013 Legislative Session, budget proviso required DCF to submit a report by October 1, 2013 about Recovery Residences in Florida. Based upon their research, the report was inconclusive including the number of Recovery Residences in the state.

The primary community concerns consist of the lack of regulation or oversight by any entity or agency, and there is little to no structure and no standard operating procedure. Due to this lack of oversight, medical treatment is occurring in some Sober Homes even though it is not permitted, as a Sober Home is not a treatment facility. Many Sober Houses are advertising themselves as the entry into treatment, while they should be the last step in the continuum of treatment or post detoxification. Anyone is capable of opening a Sober House and does not need credentials and/or accountability standards to operate one. Additionally, there is no requirement to have any life-safety inspections or background checks of the owners/operators which may present a public safety issue for tenants of these Sober Homes. Some of the Sober House

operators have partnered with laboratory facilities and/or medical providers and are engaging in insurance fraud and/or patient brokering, which is illegal but very hard to prove as the homes do not have to register with any entity or agency.

Therefore, support legislation that defines and establishes minimum regulatory standards for sober homes and their owners/operators and provides for some penalties for their failure to follow the standards.

PRE-TRIAL RELEASE

In 2012, legislation was filed that would have significantly hampered the ability of local governments to administer their pretrial release programs. According to estimates from the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission, the restrictions that would have been created by this legislation would likely cause an average of 284 defendants each month who are on supervised release to be retained in custody. Current supervised release programs cost \$4 per day, whereas costs to house a defendant in jail are approximately \$123 per day. Support maintaining county ability to provide non-monetary pre-trial release services that ensure the safety and welfare of local communities and oppose legislation that would limit the discretion of first appearance judges to prescribe pre-trial options for defendants.

REENTRY FOR NON-VIOLENT OFFENDERS

Florida continues to house one of America's largest prison populations. More than 34,000 people return to their communities each year with more than 1,200 of those coming to Palm Beach County. Experience shows that approximately one-third of prisoners released from prison will return to prison within three years. Continued prison inmate growth creates an unprecedented challenge to local communities who must absorb these individuals upon their return. Palm Beach County supports efforts to restore rights to felons and to provide resources to ensure successful re-entry into the regular workforce. Palm Beach County also continues to support corporate tax credits and bond protection for businesses that hire non-violent felons as part of a re-entry program. In addition, Palm Beach County supports the criminal justice reform described below:

Modify FS 1011.80

During the 2013 Legislative Session, Florida Statute 1011.84 was modified to prohibit the use of state funding of educational programs for state inmates. This dramatically affects our local state college, Palm Beach State College, from educating inmates at reentry facilities, including Sago Palms. Palm Beach County supports legislation aimed at increasing the successful reentry of state prisoners, including the ability of state colleges to provide coursework and training classes to inmates at reentry facilities.

REGAIN LOCAL ABILITY FOR LIMITED GUN REGULATION

During the 2011 Legislative Session, HB 45 was enacted, which created stiff financial penalties for counties and elected officials that pass local ordinances and administrative rules that regulate firearms or ammunition. These fines range from \$5,000.00 for individuals to \$100,000.00 for repayment of attorneys' fees. In addition to financial penalties, employees acting in an official capacity that knowingly violates these

provisions can be terminated immediately. The two exceptions to this new law are ordinances or rules that enact waiting periods or criminal background checks.

Palm Beach County opposes Chapter 2011-109 Laws of Florida on the grounds that it violates the County's Home Rule Authority. The County had four ordinances and two resolutions related to gun control that had to be either amended or removed from the books due to the new law. The local ordinances and resolutions related to gun possession in family daycares, sale or possession of firearms during declared emergencies, locations where weapon discharging was permissible, records and holding periods of firearms by secondhand dealers (pawn shops), and forbidding the use of firearms in natural areas. The County continues to maintain the position that it should be able to pass ordinances or local rules that it believes are in the best interest of its citizens and visitors without interference from the Legislature.

MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING PILOT PROGRAM

In the last two years over \$30 million in mental health funding had been lost to Florida's communities. Increased community funding is required to meet the needs of persons residing in the Palm Beach County area who are mentally ill and often also have severe substance use disorders.

Support a Mental Health Pilot Program at the Jerome Golden Center in Palm Beach County to fund a 12-bed co-occurring (mental health and Substance abuse) Residential II Treatment Facility designed to serve a target population of 18 years and older. The annual cost of a 12-bed program is approximately \$775,000 annually. State funds would be leveraged with Medicaid and other fund sources. Substantial savings will occur to the state with decreased State Hospital costs, jail costs and unnecessary inpatient costs. The request for a three-year pilot project with a State cost of \$575,000 annually for a three-year total of \$1.72 million.

FIREWORKS

HB 4005 by Matt Gaetz and SB 314 by Sen. Jeff Brandes have been filed for consideration during the 2014 Legislative Session. The bills would lift a general fireworks ban in Florida. Currently in state law, there is a loophole that allows the sale of fireworks to individuals who sign affidavits saying they will use the fireworks for certain activities that are exempted in statute. If the use of fireworks increases it is likely that the incidence of injury due to fireworks use will increase as well. To that end, revenue generated through the sale of fireworks should be used to offset the cost of emergency response for injuries created by their use.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL DRUG SHORTAGE

Nationwide shortages of drugs used by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) became significant in 2012, when the most basic of critical emergency drugs became difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Current coping strategies of the drug shortage in Florida include: stockpiling drugs or ordering excess supplies when available, utilizing multiple pharmaceutical vendors, purchasing drugs in alternative formats and concentrations, and restricting use of certain scarce drugs.

Other jurisdictions outside the state utilize additional strategies not currently available in Florida. Those include using medications past their manufacturer-designated expiration date and use of compounding pharmacies.

Support the State of Florida Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council Drug Shortage Task Force Recommendations to 1) allow Florida EMS providers to utilize effective drugs beyond the labeled expiration dates, under specific conditions and oversight; 2) explore options for Florida licensed hospitals with available supplies of critical drugs that are on the FDA drug shortage registry to sell or donate them to Florida licensed EMS providers; and 3) incorporate provisions for well-controlled and monitored use of compounding pharmacies to address future drug shortage issues in the non-patient EMS environment.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence occurs in all races, across all economic classes and educational levels. Nearly all victims are female (94%), and 31% of the women murdered in the United States are killed by their significant others. Forty percent of homeless families in large cities are homeless because they are fleeing violence. Children whose mothers are abused are at a higher risk of also being abused. Furthermore, substance abuse is more likely to compound the risk of domestic violence. Locally, recent news reports of domestic violence victims dying at the hands of their abusers have raised the need to support further efforts to protect victims, treat abusers, and provide resources for families.

Therefore, Palm Beach County supports:

1. Legislation that allows for a victim of domestic violence to receive unemployment compensation or terminate rental leases if the victim can prove that the discontinued employment or need to terminate a lease is a direct result of circumstances related to domestic violence as defined in s. 741.28. The victim must:
 - a. Provide evidence, such as an injunction, protective order, or other such reasonable documentation authorized by state law which reasonably proves that domestic violence has occurred.
 - b. Reasonably believe that a future act of domestic violence, including being a victim of stalking as provided in s. 784.048(3), (4), or (5), is likely to occur against the individual by a family or household member, as defined in s. 741.28, at, en route to, or en route from, the individual's place of employment or in the victim's residence.
 - c. Make reasonable efforts to preserve employment and lease by seeking a protective injunction prior to seeking a lease or voluntary employment termination.
2. If a victim successfully terminates a lease under the guidelines above, prior to a voluntarily termination of employment being granted, the victim must either attempt to relocate to a secure place or seek a reasonable accommodation from the employer, such as a transfer or different assignment, prior to being approved for unemployment compensation.

Palm Beach County also seeks a revision to Florida Statute 741.30(6)(a)(5) that would **require** court-ordered intervention treatment for perpetrators of domestic violence. This change would be modeled after the Dupage County, Illinois Domestic Violence Program, a NACo award-winning program for Innovation. This intervention program is designed to treat the perpetrator by including in their sentence a mandatory court-ordered assignment to this 26 week, 39 hour intervention program. The program fees are designed to accommodate indigent as well as full-fee payment.

LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

Coastal/open water lifeguards are employed by local governments around the state to provide effective injury prevention and emergency medical/rescue services. In emergency circumstances, pre-hospital medical care at Florida's public bathing places is necessary. In an effort to ensure minimum standards for rescue and pre-hospital medical care with transport providers, Palm Beach County supports legislative action and rule that would license and/or certify coastal/open water lifeguard agencies as BLS non-transport agencies and/or certify these agencies under the United States Lifesaving Association - Agency Certification program.

ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL LEGISLATION

1. Palm Beach County currently impounds livestock in a variety of ways, some from cruelty cases and more commonly when they are found running at large as strays. Chapter 588 in Florida Statute requires us to do various things that are costly and/or not in the best interest of the animal. Amended statute to give us the ability to act in the best interest of the animal and place them up for adoption to good homes. We would also like to handle them as domestic strays, similar to dogs and cats, which do not require costly advertisements in newspapers or postings on a courthouse bulletin board.
2. There have been several incidences of individuals who have hidden animals from authorities after those animals have seriously injured either a person or another person's animal. There have also been occasions where we would like to declare a dog as "Dangerous" following one severe animal attack to a domestic animal. We would like to see Florida Statute 767.11, 767.12 and 767.13 amended with the following:
 - FS 767.11 (b) Has ~~more than once~~ severely injured or killed a domestic animal while off the owner's property
 - FS 767.12 (8) Any dog that is the subject of a dangerous dog investigation shall not be concealed or hidden from the animal control authority. Any person who conceals a dog, hides it, moves it without proper notification and authorization, keeps it from the animal control authority or fails to surrender it for holding by the animal control authority upon request, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.
 - FSS 767.13 (6) If a dog that has been previously declared dangerous is not surrendered to the animal control authority or is hidden, concealed or moved in an attempt to keep it from the animal control authority, that person is guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

WAIVER OF PUBLIC RECORD FEES FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSIONS

Florida statute 28.24 regarding service charges by clerk of the circuit courts should be amended to add "criminal justice commissions" to the list of agencies exempt from being charged for public documents. Criminal Justice Commissions exist in Palm Beach and Sarasota counties. The impact is approximately \$2000 a year.

MARCHMAN ACT REVISIONS

The Marchman Act is a Civil Process, a law under the Florida Statute that provides for the involuntary or voluntary assessment, stabilization, and treatment of a person abusing or addicted to drugs or alcohol.

The Marchman Act involves a two-step process: assessment first, then treatment. The most common way Marchman cases are started is with the filing of a petition for assessment in the county where the substance abuser is located. The criteria for the Marchman Act petition entails that the individual has lost the power of self-control with respect to substance use; and either has inflicted or threatened or attempted to inflict physical harm on self or another or the individual In need of substance abuse services, is incapable of making a rational decision in regard to receiving services.

Several amendments the state statutes are recommended:

397.697 Court determination; effect of court order for involuntary substance abuse treatment. -

The court may order the individual to attend a recovery residence upon completion of their treatment if it is recommended by the service provider and if additional funding is available. This allows the individual to reside in a supportive drug free environment with greater chances of continued sobriety.

Failure to complete treatment may result in a new protective custody order authorized by any duty judge. This will eliminate the process of filing an additional petition and allow a quicker reaction time for the individual to reenter treatment.

397.6977 Disposition of individual upon completion of involuntary substance abuse treatment. –

Notice from the service provider that an individual has satisfactorily completed treatment or extended treatment, the individual is automatically discharged. This allows input of the service provider's professional opinion to be conveyed to the courts that the individual has successfully completed the treatment program.

A non-completion of the involuntary treatment or relapses within the twelve month timeframe by the individual, the court may retain jurisdiction over the individual. This allows for the courts to have the power to overrule in the best interest of the individual, returning him/her treatment.

397.6773 Disposition alternatives after protective custody. –

If an individual is taken into protective custody, the individual may be held beyond the allotted statute timeframe, allowing for a petition to be filed through the court. This will allow the individual to remain in a safe, secure, and drug free environment until further actions are taken and implemented.

397.6799 Disposition of minor upon completion of alternative involuntary assessment. –

When a minor has been assessed, based on the assessment and the service provider, the minor may be held in the treatment facility while a petition for involuntary treatment has been filed through the court. This will allow the minor to be monitored in a structured treatment environment as an alternative of being released.

SUPPORT ISSUES

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ISSUES

Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Trust Fund (EMPA):

The Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Trust Fund (EMPA) was created within Ch. 252, F.S. Since inception of the Trust Fund in 1993, it has remained at the same funding level despite a substantial increase in demands on county and municipal emergency management. The EMPA was administered by the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), but as of October 1, 2011, it is now placed under the oversight of the Executive Office of the Governor. Currently an annual surcharge of \$2.00 per residential property insurance policy and \$4.00 per commercial property insurance policy is imposed. A recent LCIR study suggests that changes in the insurance industry since the 1994 inception of the surcharge may be responsible for unintended “loopholes” in surcharge assessments. It is important to note that the fees or types of policies this surcharge affects has not been modified since this trust fund’s inception. Support an examination into methods to correct the deficiencies in surcharge collection and apply the surcharge to the number of units or parcels included for coverage in a commercial or residential insurance policy.

Prior to 2003, proceeds from the EMPA trust fund were distributed based on a fixed allocation formula in the statute and authorized each year by the Legislature. Since then, the annual appropriation levels for base grants to county emergency management programs have equaled \$7.1 million, a historical level representing approximately 44 percent of the annual trust fund proceeds. Support maintaining this funding level as the minimum allocation for County Base Grants and support an across the board increase in county base grants to reflect the increased demands on county emergency management programs.

JUVENILE JUSTICE – FLORIDA STATUTE 985 REWRITE

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice is currently proposing legislation that would rewrite Florida Statute 985, the primary statutory authority for juvenile justice. Among these efforts, Palm Beach County supports any revisions that relate to the following:

Juvenile Records Expungement

Palm Beach County supports the recommendations of the Blueprint Commission on Juvenile Justice to ensure youth have opportunities to gain meaningful employment and other opportunities afforded them; therefore, it is recommended that Florida Statute Chapters 119 and 943 be amended to require the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), the courts, local law enforcement, and other agencies to seal, make confidential, and prohibit availability to the public, juvenile arrest records when no charges have been filed.

Furthermore, we support legislation that would allow for juvenile arrest records of first time nonviolent offenders to remain confidential and not available for sale or disclosure by FDLE or any other government agency so long as the juvenile remains crime free. Florida law should be amended to protect the confidentiality of those juvenile arrest records, while allowing law enforcement and prosecutors access to such information.

Alternatives to Detention

Palm Beach County supports financial incentives for developing local alternative programming to divert youth from secure detention. Support legislation requiring the State to develop a fair funding policy to ensure Palm Beach County benefits from expending the funds to develop community-based alternatives to detention and residential commitment, including an appropriate allocation of domestic violence respite care beds, and developing prevention programs such as the Palm Beach County Family Violence Intervention Program.

Sentencing/Probation Options

Palm Beach County supports revisions that allow for various sentencing options for the judiciary when deciding a juvenile's sentence. Furthermore, the County supports proposed language that would discontinue the practice of placing a juvenile on probation until satisfying all restitution requirements.

Zero Tolerance Policy Revisions

Schools continue to be a major source of referrals into the Juvenile Justice system. In order to expand the use of civil citations (or similar programs), zero tolerance statutes need to be revisited. Implemented in the early nineties to address the increasing juvenile crime rates, zero tolerance policies served a purpose at that time. Over the years it has become apparent that the language ties the hands of teachers and administrators. Furthermore, it does not provide for a uniform way of addressing misconduct on school grounds as shown by the various policies even at schools within the same school district. Support efforts to enact legislation similar to that proposed by Senator Wise in the 2012 Legislative Session (SB 1886), which revises zero tolerance statutes in a way that provides for a more equal treatment of juveniles on school grounds, greater ability for school administration to address issues on campus, protects victims and supports the needs of law enforcement.

FUNDING FOR ENHANCED LIGHTING IN HIGH CRIME AREAS

In an effort to continue promoting safety in high crime areas, grant opportunities should be created to enhance lighting in these areas.

FLORIDA SERT (STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM)

Support funding for Florida SERT to ensure adequate preparation and resources when responding to disasters in the State.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTHCARE

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED PROGRAMS

For FY 2013/2014, the State of Florida will provide Palm Beach County with \$2,626,141 in funding to support the non-sponsored Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) services. TD funding is an important funding source for Palm Tran, enabling Palm Beach County to provide the most economically challenged customers with discounted rides on both our fixed route and CONNECTION services. To maintain the level of services and accommodate the needs of residents, Palm Beach County has annually supported the TD program efforts with additional funding (this year - \$291,793). Palm Beach County supports attempts to maintain funding to the TD program and to prevent diversion of these dollars for other purposes.

HOMELESSNESS

Challenge Grants & Continuum of Care Lead Agency Funding Assistance

Palm Beach County supports the following issues in conjunction with the Florida Homeless Coalition:

- SUPPORT Challenge Grants. For the coming fiscal year, the Coalition is seeking \$5 million, which will help implement projects in support of the local Continuum of Care Plan.
- SUPPORT funding for the state's 28 local homeless coalitions and the Florida Coalition for the Homeless. The Coalition is seeking *a \$1 million recurring increase to the base operational funding of \$2 million for the local CoCs*. The 28 local Lead Agency CoCs are responsible for generating more than \$284 million in federal funding assistance since 2008.

Dedicated Revenue Stream

Palm Beach County currently supports efforts by members of the Legislature to identify a dedicated revenue stream to fund programs for the homeless. Three possible sources are being considered at this time:

1. **Documentary Stamp Revenues**

Palm Beach County supports using this potential revenue stream in conjunction with Sadowski Housing Trust Fund dollars to maximize rapid re-housing initiatives.

2. **Gaming Revenues**

If the Legislature passes legislation related to gaming in Florida, Palm Beach County supports the designation of revenues resulting from an expansion of gaming or a renegotiated compact with the Seminole Tribe of Florida for homeless services.

3. **Local Discretionary Sales Surtaxes**

Palm Beach County supports a statutory change that would add a ninth category to the local discretionary sales surtax to fund homeless services through local referendum.

The County supports legislation that would include a combination of any of these three potential revenue sources.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Palm Beach County supports efforts to ensure that funds within the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund are fully appropriated for affordable housing projects and not rolled into General Revenue.

Furthermore, the Legislature should provide more flexibility in the use of housing dollars for administrative purposes. Currently, Palm Beach County has 4,000 SHIP mortgages and is required to monitor them for 15 years. The current 10% administrative cap should be adjusted based on population to allow for 20% for counties with over 1 million population and 15% for counties between 500,000 and 1 million population.

PUBLIC RECORDS EXEMPTION FOR HOMELESS POINT IN TIME COUNT IDENTIFYING DATA

Federal law requires local homeless Continuums of Care to conduct a point-in-time homeless count every other year. These numbers determine funding levels for many of the homeless programs. An issue arose recently when a newspaper reporter submitted a public records request for identifying information from the required survey. This is extremely sensitive because the homeless are often concerned during these surveys with their privacy being maintained. If there was concern about this information becoming public, then the homeless would be less likely to cooperate. This, in turn, affects federal funding levels from HUD. Therefore, Palm Beach County supports legislation that would allow identifying information such as name and date of birth to remain exempt from public record requests.

CHILD WELFARE

Extended Foster Care Funding

The Legislature made positive modifications to the Independent Living Program during the 2013 Session and also provided for Extended Foster Care in the state of Florida; however, the unfunded mandate known as the My Future My Choice Program requires the following additional services from Community Based Care Lead Agencies (CBC's):

- Full case management services for youth ages 18 to 22 who opt into extended foster care.
- Supervised living arrangements with CBC paying rent and utilities directly to the landlord or provider for youth ages 18 to 22 who opt into extended foster care.
- Youth who previously qualified for housing and case management support through APD at age 18 based on "risk of homelessness" no longer qualify due to extended foster care option. CBC's may have to fund these youth until age 22.

This unfunded mandate for youth ages 18 to 22 will cost ChildNet Palm Beach, the local CBC, \$2.5 million annually. Therefore, support revisions to existing statute and rules to adjust the language to clarify rules and responsibilities in serving youth over the age 18 that opt to extend care and allocate additional funding to cover the CBC's costs associated with implementing the independent living legislation.

Adequate Funding for Community Based Care Child Welfare

South Florida has experienced a tragically high number of child deaths since April 2013. Some of these deaths can be attributed to an underfunded and overworked child welfare system. In order to fully protect children involved with the dependency system in our community and across Florida, Palm Beach County supports budget requests in the amount of \$4 million for FY 2014-15 (\$16 million over four years) for Case Management to improve outcomes by reducing frontline turnover and increasing average tenure for frontline workers and supervisors.

Furthermore, Palm Beach County supports an additional request of \$16.4 million, the same amount as the current fiscal year, to adequately fund CBC's across the state for services to abused and neglected children. Support efforts for a hold harmless equity formula in which \$16.4 million is added to the CBC budgets of lead agencies that are not adequately funding rather than pulling funds from other lead agencies.

SUPPORT ISSUES

RETINOBLASTOMA

Retinoblastoma is a disease that causes the growth of malignant tumors in the retinal cell layer of the eye and affects 1 in every 12,000 children. Most cases occur in the first two years of life, which is why it is important that screening of this disease take place between birth and 5 years of age. Worldwide, over 7,000

children die each year due to lack of early detection. Only the State of California has passed legislation that requires eye pathology screening of newborns and infants. In infancy, eye dilation is needed in order for an ophthalmoscope to detect 100% of the tumors. The use of a photograph of the child from parents and/or physicians can aid in the determination of utilizing eye drops necessary for eye dilation. This 10 second exam will also detect other ocular diseases that affect newborns, infants and toddlers such as congenital cataracts.

The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners continues to issue an annual proclamation declaring December as “Joey Bergsma Retinoblastoma Awareness Month” to raise the awareness of this disease. In addition, the Board passed a resolution urging the Legislature to require exams for early detection of Retinoblastoma in newborns and infants.

Legislation should amend Florida Statutes to “require certain eye examinations for all infants born in hospitals in the state and providing that coverage for children under health insurance policies and health maintenance organizations must include certain eye examinations for infants and children.”

SICKLE CELL ANEMIA SCREENING

Sickle cell disease is an inherited disorder that mostly affects people of African ancestry, but also occurs in other ethnic groups, including people who are of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern descent. The disease affects red blood cells (RBCs), which are abnormally shaped. This abnormality can result in painful episodes, serious infections, chronic anemia, and damage to body organs. More than 70,000 Americans have sickle cell anemia. And about 2 million Americans — including 1 in 12 African Americans — have sickle cell trait, which means they carry a single gene for the disease and can pass this gene along to their children, but do not have the disease itself.

Currently, most states, including Florida, include sickle cell screening as part of the Newborn Screening Panel that all newborns receive upon birth regardless of ability to pay. Although all newborns are screened for this potentially life-threatening condition, most infants that test positive for this disease will not start showing symptoms until 4 months of age. Sometimes symptoms can be delayed until the infant is two years of age or older. Because of this, parents may delay treatment. Early treatment is imperative in the early weeks of life to avoid complications in these tiny infants, including sepsis or spleen rupture.

Another risk for patients with sickle cell diseases is reduced access to comprehensive care, which can be limited by social, economic, cultural, and geographic barriers. These barriers include limitations in geographic access to comprehensive care, the varied use of effective treatments, the high reliance on emergency departments and on public health programs, and the limited number of health care providers with knowledge and experience to manage and treat sickle cell anemia. Economically, a 2009 study by the University of Florida suggests a lifetime cost of care averaging \$460,151 per patient with sickle cell disease.

Therefore, Palm Beach County supports legislative efforts that would increase public awareness educational programs regarding sickle cell disease for parents, patients and medical providers that encourage early intervention and treatment. The County also supports funding to increase the number of medical residency slots for students interested in furthering their education in hematology to increase the number of providers

that specialize in the treatment of sickle cell diseases. And, lastly, the County supports interventions designed to prevent sickle cell disease-related complications and avoid hospitalizations that may reduce the significant economic burden of the disease on the patient and their families.

CONSUMER SERVICES

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

TOWING BILL

The following changes to statute should be considered to provide additional consumer protection:

F.S. 715.07 implies but does not require the direct and express authorization from a property owner to have a towing company remove an illegally parked vehicle. Amend statute to specifically define “express authorization” so that only a property owner or their specific designee can authorize the towing of inappropriately parked vehicles or vessels on private property.

F.S. 715.07 provides no guidance or definition as to what documentation is required for owners of impounded vehicles or vessels to prove they are the actual owners. Amend F.S. 715.07 to define the required documentation which towing companies must accept to prove that a person owns an impounded vehicle or vessel. These definitions would save consumers considerable dollars in compounding storage fees and give towing companies direction in requiring specific types of ownership documentation.

Previous legislation filed in the Florida Legislature would have provided certification and training for wrecker operators and require at least two forms of payment, including cash, to be accepted but did not pass. Require towing companies to accept payment for towed vehicles/vessels beyond cash to include valid checks and credit cards.

A towing business’ hours of operation currently defined in Florida Statute 715.07 as between 8am and 6pm should also be defined in Chapter 713.78 to provided consistency in Florida law and provided consumer protections from being required to pay excessive fees.

Additionally, a cap on towing mileage radius should be provided in statute for certain regions of the state to ensure vehicles are not towed so far from the original destination so as to overly burden the car owner.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT/ADMINISTRATIVE

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD

Due to recent changes in the state law, the presumption of correctness now rests on the Property Appraiser's office and petitioners to the Value Adjustment Board are no longer required to prove the assessed value of their property was inaccurate. The Palm Beach County Value Adjustment Board received a record 19,800 petitions in 2009 from residents who pay a \$15 filing fee in comparison to the approximate \$47 in costs to the County to facilitate a petition. In 2010 while the number of petitions filed has decreased, the number of hearings has remained consistent with the number from the previous year. The current filing fee has been in effect since 1988. With the changes in law coupled with the vast number of petitions filed and expected to grow, the filing fee should be raised to \$50 to cover the anticipated increasing costs to process them.

HENRY FLAGLER BILL

Support SB 250 by Senator Joseph Abruzzo and HB 131 by Representative Bill Hager to establish a Henry Morrison Flagler Memorial in the courtyard of the Capitol courtyard. The Henry Morrison Flagler Museum would be responsible for funding the figurative bronze sculpture to be installed in the memorial location. Henry Flagler is credited with the development of modern Florida. The transportation infrastructure and the tourism and agricultural industries he established in the late 1800s and early 1900s remain the very foundation of Florida's economy, while the building of the Over-Sea Railroad remains the most ambitious engineering feat ever undertaken by a private citizen. When Henry Flagler began his work in Florida, it was perhaps the poorest state in the Union. Today, thanks in large part to Henry Flagler, Florida is the third largest state in the Union with an economy larger than 90% of the world's nations. Few if any individuals have had a greater or more lasting impact on a state than Henry Flagler has had in Florida.

EDUCATION

SUPPORT ISSUES

STATE LIBRARY FUNDING

Local governments receive State support for libraries through three different programs: the State Aid program, the Regional Multi-type Library Cooperative Grant program, and the Public Library Construction Grant program. Continuation of these funding sources will ensure that the State will play an appropriate role

in enhancing public library service by matching local library expenditures, enhancing consortia services to area libraries, and providing needed dollars for the construction of new public libraries.

The Florida Library Association **strongly supports** the restoration of the State Aid to Public Libraries program to at least **\$33,400,000**. This level was last appropriated in FY 2001. **During a 10 year decline, State Aid to Public Libraries has been reduced by 33%** to \$22,298,834 for the current year FY 2013.

Forty-nine percent of Floridians have a library card and in 2012 checked out an average of eight items a year per person. Floridians visited their public library 81.9 million times in 2012 in person and made 92.3 million virtual visits to their public library! **A strong fiscal foundation for our public libraries is critical to the state's economic and educational success.**

Florida's State Aid grant program has been the cornerstone of public library support in our state since 1963 and is a national model. **State Aid grant funding assists Floridians with:**

- Economic development resources to small businesses and job seekers.
- Access to government services, especially e-government – public libraries are the “go to” place when Floridians need to access the Internet and the vast array of services and products online.
- Education and reading – libraries are the safety net that insures school success for students of all ages.

For every \$1.00 invested in public libraries, the return on investment is \$8.32, Gross Regional Product increases by \$10.57, and income (wages) increases by \$22.97. For every \$3,491 spent on public libraries from public funding sources in Florida, one job (in the economy, not just in libraries) is created.

Regional Multi-type Library Cooperatives

The Palm Beach County Library System is part of the regional multi-type library consortia known as the Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), which connects both public and private libraries of all types to one another and allows the community to be served more effectively through the joint use of technology, continuing education and training of library staff. Each grantee is awarded up to \$400,000 but it requires a ten percent cash match of local funds. State funding should be restored to \$1.5 million level, the level vetoed from the 2012-2013 budget. These funds are critical for Florida's five multi-type library cooperatives (MLC's). These funds are used to:

- Maintain the Florida database of library records that makes possible interlibrary loan among libraries
- Promote resource sharing so Floridians can easily obtain resources from other libraries using statewide delivery and reciprocal borrowing services
- Continuously upgrade the skills of library employees to improve the experience of Florida library customers
- Create connections between libraries to encourage adoption of technologies and services important to Floridians

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY FUNDING

Support Florida Atlantic University as it seeks funding parity in the Florida Legislature. Support the University's focus on leveraging its resources and strategic partnerships as it develops programs that foster entrepreneurship, utilizes bioscience research for drug discovery, and explores the use of technology. Support increasing research funding at FAU, and the resulting growth of the Adams Center for Entrepreneurship, the Jupiter Bioscience Initiative, and the Charles E. Schmidt School of Medicine.

Encourage legislative efforts to designate an alternative funding source for capital maintenance and construction for state universities, and to provide additional flexibility for current authority and funding sources.

CULTURAL FACILITIES FUNDING

Support funding for the 2014-2015 Ranked Cultural Facilities List as recommended by the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. Of the 29 projects recommended for funding, three are from Palm Beach County: #2 South Florida Science Museum - \$500,000; #16 Palm Beach Dramaworks - \$500,000; and #17 Lake Worth Community redevelopment Agency - \$150,000.

SIGNAGE AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS –LOCAL BILL

Currently, legislation passed allows the School District of Palm Beach County to place signage at certain school properties that would otherwise be prohibited under local zoning codes. This effort has preserved limited funding streams for local education needs.

Support a continuation of the program through extension of the pilot program or a more permanent program facilitated through a local bill that allows the School District of Palm Beach County to continue with the current signage program.

ELIMINATION OF SCHOOL READINESS WAIT LIST/EXPAND EARLY LEARNING COALITION SUBSIDIZED CHILDCARE

Support appropriation requests that would eliminate the School Readiness wait list in Palm Beach County and provide additional administrative flexibility for both public and private program providers. The School Readiness program provides subsidized child care funds to at-risk children, children from families receiving temporary cash assistance or just transitioned from receiving temporary cash assistance, and the working poor. The first two categories are legislatively mandated to receive funding. The last category of funding is dispersed at the discretion of the local Early Learning Coalitions. Approximately every \$1 invested in subsidized childcare for the working poor earns \$16.67 in federal and state dollars, yet there is a constant wait list for families who need these services. Typically, these families are living on minimum wage incomes. Without subsidized childcare, these families would need more subsidized programs at a greater expense to taxpayers. There are more than 5,000 children on the waitlist in Palm Beach County.

AGRICULTURE

FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Integrated Farm to School programs have the ability to positively affect entire communities. One of the most valuable components of supporting Farm to School initiatives is the opportunity to increase access to fresh produce within a domestic food assistance program that services low-income families. Farm to School programs encourage a lifelong appreciation for healthy eating habits by creating an environment that exposes children to a variety of fruits and vegetables. Aside from the nutritional benefits of increasing the availability of fresh produce in school meals, the local economy benefits from an additional marketplace and could indirectly promote job creation in the agricultural community. Support legislation that would assist in integrating locally grown produce into school meals.

GLEANNING

Gleaning is the practice of allowing volunteer organizations to partner with growers to provide fresh produce that would otherwise go to waste to the hungry. It is a traditional way of collecting crops from farmers' fields that have been mechanically harvested or are not economically profitable to harvest. Some local growers in Palm Beach County also set aside a portion of their fields for gleaning prior to harvesting and regardless of economic profitability. Palm Beach County supports revisions to existing statutes dealing with gleaning in order to provide additional protections to growers who allow volunteers on their property, specifically packing houses, to recover produce for distribution to food banks and/or feeding programs.

It is estimated that 52 million pounds of produce is plowed under in Palm Beach County each year while over 120,000 residents experience food insecurity. Fear of litigation keeps growers on the sidelines in the food recovery efforts. Removing that fear will increase opportunities for charitable agencies to conduct gleaning events. And, while some liabilities are provided for in Florida Statutes, further clarification is needed.