



TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

155 F Road • Loxahatchee Groves, Florida 33470 • (561) 793-2418 Phone • www.loxahatcheegrovesfl.gov

Friday, October 10, 2025

Anita Kane

Mayor

Margaret Herzog

Vice Mayor

Todd McLendon

Councilmember

Lisa El-Ramey

Councilmember

Paul Coleman II

Councilmember

Francine L. Ramaglia

Town Manager

Valerie Oakes

Town Clerk

Representative John Snyder
Chair, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation
Florida House of Representatives
Palm Beach County Governmental Center
301 N. Olive Avenue, Suite 701
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

SUBJECT: Letter of Intent — Local Bill Relating to the Regulation of Fireworks Within the Town of Loxahatchee Groves

Dear Representative Snyder:

On behalf of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves, this letter serves as the Town's request for a local bill relating to the regulation of fireworks within the Agricultural Residential (AR) Zoned Area of Loxahatchee Groves. This proposed legislation mirrors the successful local bill enacted for the Village of Wellington (Chapter 2021-245, Laws of Florida) and would allow the Town to regulate the sale and use of fireworks to protect public safety, livestock, and property within our rural and equestrian community.

Background and Purpose

Loxahatchee Groves was incorporated to preserve—rather than diminish—its rural character. The minimum lot size in the Town's Agricultural Residential (AR) zoning district is five acres. The Town has consistently prioritized preservation of its natural tree canopy, encouraging reforestation and tree retention in all new development. As a result, Loxahatchee Groves remains far more heavily wooded than most municipalities in Palm Beach County.

This rural character and dense canopy also heighten the community's wildfire risk, a fact underscored by the continued operation of a Florida Division of Forestry (FDF) facility within Town boundaries. The Town's partnership with FDF reflects a shared commitment to vegetation management, wildfire prevention, and sustainable reforestation. These joint efforts—combined with Town-led initiatives such as the Hyde Park Reforestation and North Road canopy projects—illustrate the Town's proactive approach to protecting its environment and reducing ignition hazards associated with fireworks.

The Town's close coordination with FDF, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, and local nurseries



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Loxahatchee Groves uniquely worthy of this legislative demonstrates the intergovernmental and community partnership model that underpins this local bill. It is precisely these partnerships—spanning forestry, conservation, and animal welfare—that make consideration.

Economic Impact

When the Village of Wellington pursued its local bill in 2021, the 2018 Florida International University (FIU) study estimated that the equestrian industry generated approximately \$196 million annually in sales of goods and services within Palm Beach County.

Since that time, the industry's regional impact has expanded dramatically. According to data from the 2024 Winter Equestrian Festival, equestrian activities produced an estimated \$403.6 million total economic impact, and the 2025 Winter Equestrian Festival further increased that figure to approximately \$538 million. Statewide, the Florida equine industry contributes \$12.8 billion in total output and supports over 112,000 jobs.

Because Loxahatchee Groves shares its geography and infrastructure with the Wellington equestrian hub, our community benefits from and is directly affected by this economic ecosystem. This growth demonstrates both the expanded value of the industry and the increased need to protect its animals, businesses, and residents from avoidable harm caused by fireworks.

Local Bill Request

This bill would create a limited exemption for the Town of Loxahatchee Groves from the provisions of sections 791.001 and 791.08, Florida Statutes, to allow the Town to regulate the sale and use of fireworks within its Agricultural Residential (AR) Zoned Area on the three designated holidays (New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and Independence Day), except for:

- Supervised public displays approved and permitted by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and Fire Rescue Department; and
- Fireworks used solely for agricultural purposes as authorized under section 791.07, Florida Statutes.

Justification and Background

Chapter 791, Florida Statutes, was enacted to create a uniform statewide scheme for the sale and use of fireworks. Section 791.02 makes it unlawful to sell, expose for sale, sell at retail, or use or explode for supervised public displays by fair associations, amusement parks, and other organized groups.



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Re: Local Bill Relating to Fireworks Regulation in Town

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Anita Kane
Mayor

any fireworks except Such displays must be handled by a competent operator and approved by the chiefs of the police and fire departments of the municipality in which the display is to be held, and the fire chief must determine that the display is not hazardous to property or persons.

Margaret Herzog
Vice Mayor

The prohibition in section 791.02 does not apply to the purchase, sale, or use of fireworks used exclusively for agricultural purposes—as provided in section 791.07, Florida Statutes. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is responsible for adopting rules relating to such agricultural uses.

Todd McLendon
Councilmember

In 2007, the Legislature amended the law to preempt local governments from adopting any ordinance, rule, or regulation after March 8, 2007, that directly prohibits or interferes with the safety standards established by state law or the right to purchase, sell, use, or possess consumer fireworks. As a result, the Town of Loxahatchee Groves is currently preempted from regulating fireworks within its boundaries, since no ordinance existed before that date.

Lisa El-Ramey
Councilmember

Paul Coleman II
Councilmember

In 2020, the Legislature adopted Senate Bill 140, codified as Chapter 2020-11, Laws of Florida (now section 791.08, Florida Statutes), providing that the use of fireworks is permitted on three designated holidays: New Year's Day, Independence Day, and New Year's Eve. While well-intentioned, this exception continues to expose horses, livestock, and residents in the Town of Loxahatchee Groves to danger and distress on days when fireworks use is most common.

Francine L. Ramaglia
Town Manager

In addition to its equestrian and agricultural operations, Loxahatchee Groves hosts one of the highest concentrations of licensed wildlife and conservation sanctuaries in Palm Beach County and perhaps the state. Within and around the Town's Agricultural Residential (AR) Zoned Area are globally recognized facilities such as the Panther Ridge Conservation Center, which provides permanent refuge for endangered big cats; the Rainforest Clinic for Birds & Exotics, which treats and rehabilitates parrots and other exotic species; the World Parrot Trust U.S. Headquarters, advancing international parrot and rain forest conservation; and the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, which conducts breeding and research programs for critically endangered wildlife.

These facilities collectively care for hundreds of animals—including parrots, big cats, primates, and rare ungulates—that are highly sensitive to shock, vibration, and bright flashes from fireworks. Sudden noise and light can trigger panic or flight responses, injuring animals and endangering



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caretakers. Protecting these sanctuaries, together with the Town's equestrian, agricultural, and residential properties, is central to preserving Loxahatchee Groves' identity as a humane and environmentally responsible community.

Through its partnerships with the Florida Division of Forestry, local nurseries, and conservation organizations, the Town continues to advance tree-canopy protection, habitat restoration, and wildfire-risk reduction. The proposed local bill aligns with these ongoing efforts by minimizing ignition risks and reducing stress to domestic and wild animals alike.

Enforcement and Implementation

Implementation of this local bill would require a coordinated enforcement effort among multiple agencies to ensure compliance and public safety. Enforcement would include the following:

- Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO): Respond to violations and public safety complaints, enforce permits for approved public displays, and support fire suppression efforts when necessary.
- Florida Division of Forestry (Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services): Provide fire-risk assessment, wildfire mitigation guidance, and compliance coordination for open lands and agricultural areas.
- Town of Loxahatchee Groves Code Enforcement: Issue citations for violations, conduct public education and outreach, and coordinate permitting for authorized displays.

The Town estimates the annual administrative and enforcement cost at approximately \$25,000 to \$35,000 per year, covering training, staff time, public education, and coordination with PBSO and the Division of Forestry. These costs can be absorbed within existing public safety and code enforcement budgets through interagency partnerships and shared resources.

Cost of Inaction

Failure to enact this local bill would come at a substantial and measurable cost. Even a single fireworks-related incident—such as a stable fire, panicked livestock injury, or wildlife sanctuary disturbance—can result in property loss, veterinary or emergency response costs, and animal fatalities exceeding hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Beyond direct damages, the indirect costs to the community are equally significant: disruption of therapeutic and educational programs, loss of public trust, and harm to the Town's reputation as a



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haven for equestrian and conservation activity. These impacts would far outweigh the modest annual enforcement and coordination costs the Town anticipates under this legislation.

The Town's proactive pursuit of this bill is not simply regulatory—it is a preventive measure to safeguard millions of dollars in local and regional economic activity, preserve public safety, and protect the lives of animals and residents that define the character of Loxahatchee Groves.

Summary

This Local Bill request only seeks to create a partial exemption for the Town from the provisions of sections 791.001 and 791.08, Florida Statutes, to allow the Town to regulate fireworks within its Agricultural Residential (AR) Zoned Area for non-agricultural use on the three holidays stated above. This Local Bill does not seek to preclude the agricultural exemption for fireworks use found in section 791.07.

The Town of Loxahatchee Groves does not believe the Legislature considered the impact of prior legislation on unique equestrian communities such as Loxahatchee Groves and Wellington. Our equestrian residents have grave concerns about the effect that unregulated fireworks use on these holidays has on horses, livestock, and property. Without passage of this local bill exempting the Town from the application of sections 791.001 and 791.08, the Town will remain unable to protect its equestrian citizens and their animals from the dangers associated with fireworks use on these designated holidays.

Please find enclosed the following supporting documents for consideration by the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation:

- Draft Local Bill Text
- Economic Impact Statement
- Map of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves Agricultural Residential (AR) Zoned Area

Presenter Information

Pursuant to Delegation requirements, the Town designates the following representative to present this bill:

The Honorable Anita Kane

Mayor, Town of Loxahatchee Groves

(561) 793-2418 | Akane@loxahatcheegrovesfl.gov



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We appreciate the Delegation's consideration of this request and look forward to presenting the proposal at the November 13, 2025 Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Francine Ramaglia, Town Manager
Town of Loxahatchee Groves



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Friday, October 10, 2025

RE: Town of Loxahatchee Groves — Fireworks Regulation Local Bill Summary (2025)

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Purpose:

To allow the Town of Loxahatchee Groves to regulate the sale and use of fireworks within its Agricultural Residential (AR) Zoned Area to protect public safety, livestock, wildlife sanctuaries, and tree canopy from fire and injury hazards.

Background:

Current Florida law (Chapter 791, F.S.) prevents cities from regulating fireworks and allows use on three holidays—New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and Independence Day. Loxahatchee Groves is a rural, equestrian community with large-lot farms, animal sanctuaries, and a Florida Division of Forestry station. Fireworks in this area pose serious risks to horses, exotic animals, and residents, and increase the danger of brush fires.

Summary of the Bill:

- Creates a limited local exemption from state fireworks preemption.
- Authorizes the Town to prohibit the sale and use of consumer fireworks within its AR Zone.
- Preserves the agricultural exemption in section 791.07, F.S. (farm and hatchery use).
- Allows supervised, permitted public displays approved by Palm Beach County Fire Rescue and the Sheriff's Office.
- Does not affect fireworks sales or use outside the AR Zone.

Community Context:

Loxahatchee Groves is home to several recognized animal and conservation facilities, including:

- Panther Ridge Conservation Center (big cats)
- Rainforest Clinic for Birds & Exotics (avian rehabilitation)
- World Parrot Trust U.S. Headquarters (rainforest conservation)
- Rare Species Conservatory Foundation (endangered species research)

These organizations, along with the Town's equestrian farms and canopy reforestation programs, make fireworks regulation a matter of both safety and stewardship.

Enforcement:

- Joint enforcement by the Town's Code Enforcement Division, the Florida Division of Forestry, and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.
- Annual implementation cost estimated at \$25,000–\$35,000, covered within existing budgets.

Cost of Inaction:

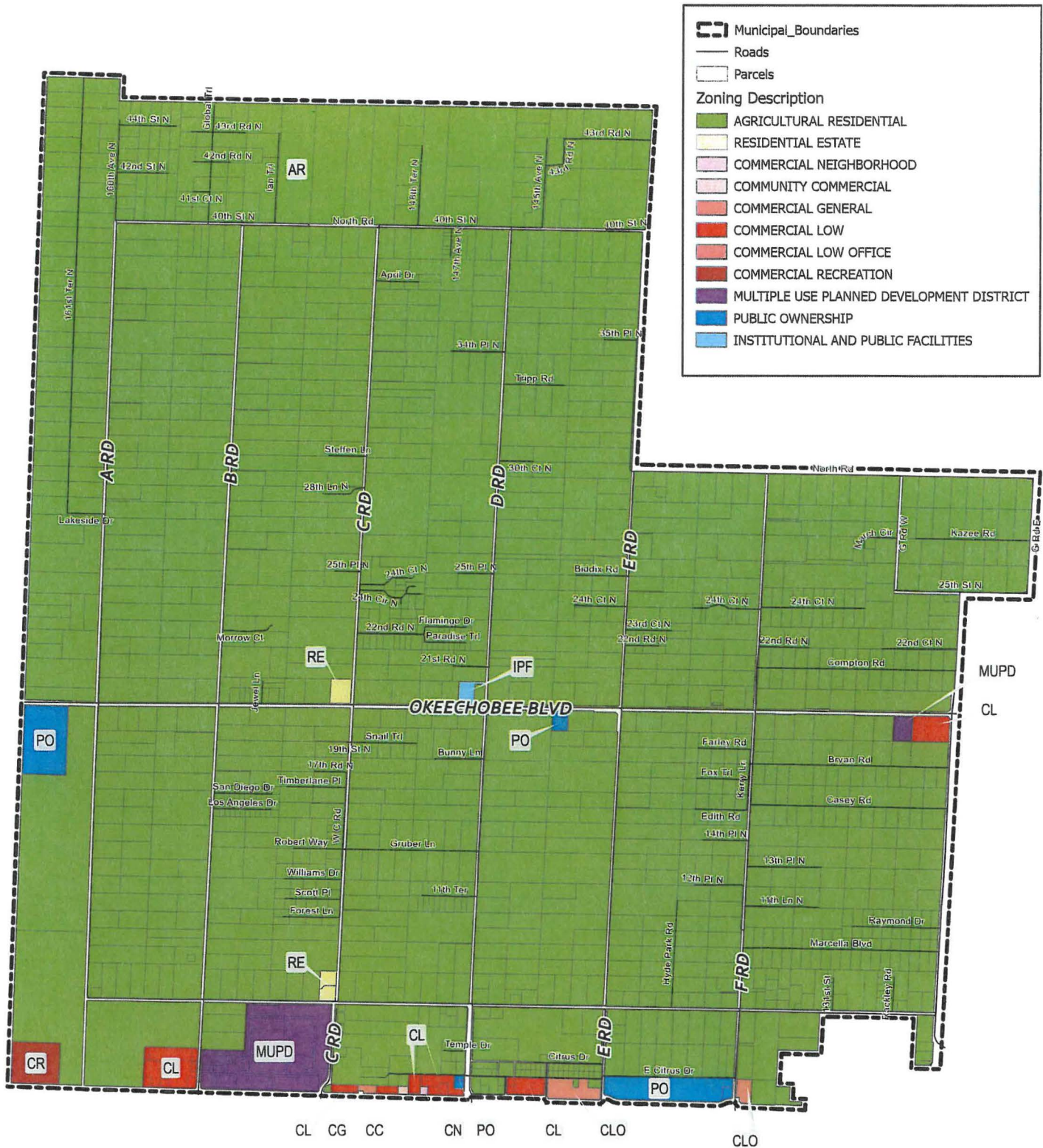
A single fire or animal injury incident could cause hundreds of thousands of dollars in property loss, veterinary expenses, or program disruption. Preventing such events protects the Town's economic base, rural identity, and public safety.

Attached please find the Town's Zoning Designation Map.



LOXAHATCHEE GROVES FLORIDA

ZONING DESIGNATION



1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Town of Loxahatchee Groves, Palm
3 Beach County; providing an exception to general law;
4 prohibiting the sale and use of fireworks located
5 within the Town of Loxahatchee Groves Agricultural Residential
6 (AR) zoning district except under specified circumstances;
7 providing applicability; providing an effective date.

8
9 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
10

11 Section 1. Notwithstanding ss. 791.001 and 791.08, Florida
12 Statutes, the sale and use of fireworks within the Town of
13 Loxahatchee Groves Agricultural Residential (AR) zoning district
14 are prohibited on all days of the year except for the following:

15 (1) Supervised public displays within the jurisdictional
16 boundaries of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves where such displays
17 are handled by a competent operator to be approved by the Palm
18 Beach County Sheriff's and Fire departments, and shall be of such

19 a character, and so located, discharged, or fired as in the
20 opinion of the chief of the fire department, after proper
21 inspection, shall not be hazardous to property or endanger any
22 person. Application for permits shall be made in writing at least
23 15 days in advance of the date of the display. After such
24 privilege shall have been granted, sales, possession, use, and
25 distribution of fireworks for such display shall be lawful for
26 that purpose only. No permit granted hereunder shall be
27 transferable.

28 (2) Nothing herein is intended or shall prevent the
29 importation, purchase, sale, or use of fireworks for
30 agricultural purposes in s. 791.07, Florida Statutes.

31 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
LOCAL BILL ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FORM

Read all instructions carefully.

House local bill policy prohibits a local bill from being considered by a committee or subcommittee without an Economic Impact Statement. This form must be prepared by an individual who is qualified to establish fiscal data and impacts and has personal knowledge of the information given (for example, a chief financial officer of a particular local government) and include information for the first two full fiscal years after the effective date of the local bill. Please file this completed form with the Clerk of the House as soon as possible after a bill is filed. Additional pages may be attached as necessary.

BILL #: _____

SPONSOR(S): _____

RELATING TO: Town of Loxahatchee Groves

[Indicate Area Affected (City, County or Special District) and Subject]

☐

Check if this is a revised Economic Impact Statement

I. REVENUES:

These figures are new revenues that would not exist but for the passage of the bill. The term "revenue" contemplates, but is not limited to, taxes, fees, and special assessments. For example, license plate fees may be a revenue source. If the bill will add or remove property or individuals from the tax base, include this information as well.

	<u>First FY</u>	<u>Second FY</u>
Revenue decrease due to bill:	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>
Revenue increase due to bill:	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>

II. COST:

Include all costs, both direct and indirect, including start-up costs. If the bill repeals the existence of a certain entity, state the related costs, such as satisfying liabilities and distributing assets.

Expenditures for Implementation, Administration, and Enforcement:

<u>First FY</u>	<u>Second FY</u>
\$ <u>35,000</u>	\$ <u>28,000</u>

Please include explanations and calculations regarding how each dollar figure was determined in reaching total cost.

Printed educational materials, website, social media campaigns and PSAs - \$10,000

Permanent and temporary signage - \$12,000

PBSO and code enforcement efforts during the holidays - \$8,000

Permit Review - \$5,000

III. FUNDING SOURCE(S):

State the specific sources from which funding will be received, for example, license plate fees, state funds, borrowed funds, or special assessments.

If certain funding changes are anticipated to occur beyond the following two fiscal years, explain the change and at what rate taxes, fees, or assessments will be collected in those years.

	<u>First FY</u>	<u>Second FY</u>
Local:	\$ 35,000	\$ 28,000
State:	\$ 0	\$ 0
Federal:	\$ 0	\$ 0

IV. ECONOMIC IMPACT: * In addition, please see attachment

Potential Advantages:

Include all possible outcomes linked to the bill, such as increased efficiencies, and positive or negative changes to tax revenue. If an act is being repealed or an entity dissolved, include the increased or decreased efficiencies caused thereby. Include specific figures for anticipated job growth.

1. Advantages to Individuals: More peace and quiet on the holidays resulting in less stress on animals, causing less stress and expense for farm operators.
2. Advantages to Businesses: Less need to have staff in place on farm operations to help maintain calm among affected animals
3. Advantages to Government:

Potential Disadvantages:

Include all possible outcomes linked to the bill, such as inefficiencies, shortages, or market changes anticipated. Include reduced business opportunities, such as reduced access to capital or training. State any decreases in tax revenue as a result of the bill.

1. Disadvantages to Individuals: Additional expense and effort for those who want to have private fireworks displays located from their property
2. Disadvantages to Businesses:

3. Disadvantages to Government:

V. DESCRIBE THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE BILL ON PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES:

The impact is anticipated to be relatively minor. There are may be a slightly heavier workload on permitting staff for reviewing permits for fireworks displays.

VI. SPECIFIC DATA USED IN REACHING ESTIMATES:

Include the type(s) and source(s) of data used, percentages, dollar figures, all assumptions made, history of the industry/issue affected by the bill, and any audits.

Estimates were arrived at based on prior experiences of the Town for the cost of signage acquisition and installation, mailing of educational fliers within the community and production of Public Service Annoucements, and general permitting costs for similar special events

VII. CERTIFICATION BY PREPARER

I hereby certify I am qualified to establish fiscal data and impacts and have personal knowledge of the information given. I have reviewed all available financial information applicable to the substance of the above-stated local bill and confirm the foregoing

Economic Impact Statement is a true and accurate estimate of the economic impact of the bill.

PREPARED BY:

Francine L. Ramaglia

[Must be signed by Preparer]

Print preparer's name:

Francine L. Ramaglia

10/8/25

Date

TITLE (such as Executive Director, Actuary, Chief Accountant, or Budget Director):

Town Manager

REPRESENTING:

Town of Loxahatchee Groves

PHONE:

561-793-2418

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

Framaglia@loxahatcheegrovesfl.gov