



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 6568, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Direction, Re: Funding for Environmentally Endangered Lands (EELs) Program - All Districts

Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal impact will depend on Board direction.

Dept/Office:

Parks and Recreation EELs Program

Requested Action:

It is requested that the Board of County Commissioners provide direction to staff regarding funding for the EELs Program referendum.

Summary Explanation and Background:

For Fiscal Year 23/24, the combined EEL's debt and operating millage is .0651

The current ad valorem funding for the EELs Program sunsets in September 2024 and the County will no longer be able to levy an operating millage for the maintenance of the existing conservation lands and the operation of the three education centers unless additional bonds are issued for land acquisition and/or public use improvements under the recently approved referendum.

In November 2022, Brevard voters passed a referendum with the following language:

"Environmentally Endangered Land and Water Areas Bond Referendum:

Shall Brevard County issue bonds to extend the Environmentally Endangered Lands program to acquire, improve and maintain wildlife habitat, wetlands, woodlands, and lands that protect Indian River Lagoon and St Johns River, and maintain and improve nature education centers, with citizen oversight, which bonds don't exceed \$50,000,000 aggregate principal amount, bear interest not exceeding maximum legal rate, mature twenty years from issuance and are payable from levying annual ad valorem taxes not exceeding 0.1465 mills?"

The EELs Program has historically been funded with ad valorem tax revenue resulting from two separate Countywide millages:

- EELs Operating millage funds operations and maintenance of existing lands and centers and is included in the County's aggregate millage.
- EELs Debt Service millage funds debt payments on the existing bonds for land acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands and centers and is not included in the County's aggregate millage.

*See attached table for the bonding option costs and millage rates.

Option 1: Issue bonds to fund capital improvements to existing facilities and equipment. Fund annual program operations to maintain conservation lands and environmental education centers.

Bond \$3.2M (debt millage .0034) Operating \$3.0M (millage .0489)
Total millage .0523

Option 1a: in addition to Option 1, issue bonds for initial land acquisition with a specific focus on lands that directly benefit the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River.

Bond \$6.2M (debt millage .0066) Operating \$3.0M (millage .0489)
Total millage .0555

Option 2: Issue bonds to build a new education center and maintenance field office on existing land. Fund annual program operations to maintain conservation lands and environmental education centers.

Bond \$4.0M (debt millage .0042) Operating \$3.2M (millage .0522)
Total millage .0564

Option 3: Issue bonds for secondary land acquisition, which includes the initial land purchase of Option 1a, with a specific focus on lands that directly benefit the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River. Fund annual program operations to maintain conservation lands and environmental education centers.

Bond \$14.0M (debt millage .0148) Operating \$3.275M (millage .0534)
Total millage .0682

Option 4: Any additional option requested by the Board.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Please return Board Memo to the EELs Program.