



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TO: Jim Liesenfelt, Interim County Manager

THRU: Tad Calkins, Assistant County Manager

FROM: Virginia Barker, Director, Natural Resources Management Dept.

SUBJ: Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendation (CEER) #2025070

CEER #2025070, titled Resilient Restoration of Indian River Lagoon, was received by the County from Susan B. Connolly.

Citizen Statement:

In 2024 there were 52 wastewater spills in the Central Indian River Lagoon watershed and 9 of these directly into the lagoon. Spill volumes ranged from 50 gallons to 1.33 million gallons, including untreated and partially treated wastewater.

Citizen Recommendation:

Revise the mission of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon City Oversight Committee to an Indian River Lagoon Solution Board with the main function to restore resiliency of the IRL. The Board could serve as a clearinghouse for receiving, reviewing, and recommending to the County Commission programs and actions that are root-cause solutions that would restore our IRL and serve in a preventative capacity for the future. The Board could be a collaboration of county commissioners, citizens, businesses, professionals and all who are ready for resolution rather than remediation. The successful results of this entity would be comprehensive and complete and affect our entire ecosystem. The purpose would be for sustainable, long-term actions within a short-term time frame.

Staff Analysis:

Wastewater spills have a localized and sometimes acute impact on water quality in the vicinity of the spill. In recent years, wastewater spills have contributed a relatively small fraction of the total nutrient pollution in the Indian River Lagoon. Nevertheless, improvements are being funded by a combination of utility fees, grants, loans and Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) cost-share. To prevent spills, utilities along the lagoon are actively searching for leaks, lining pipes to prevent inflow and infiltration, adding redundant pumps to avoid spills caused by equipment failures, installing back-up

generators to avoid spills caused by power outages, increasing storage capacity to address surges in volume, and upgrading infrastructure to advanced wastewater treatment standards.

The SOIRL Citizen Oversight Committee (COC) was established by Brevard County Ordinance 2016-15 to play a key role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of funds from the half-cent sales surtax for the SOIRL Program. Uses of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Surtax were specified in the 2016 ballot language, with more detail in County Ordinance 16-15, and in Interlocal Agreements with all municipalities in Brevard.

Citizen Oversight Committee members are selected to represent a diversity of professions and perspectives including science, technology, finance, real estate, tourism, lagoon commerce and lagoon advocacy. The current mission of the COC is to:

- Oversee the use of the half-cent sales tax revenue dedicated to restoring the Indian River Lagoon.
- Ensure projects are science-based, cost-effective, and impactful in reducing pollution, improving water quality, and restoring natural habitats.
- Adapt and refine restoration strategies based on new scientific data and environmental monitoring.
- Promote transparency and public trust by reviewing expenditures and providing recommendations to the Brevard County Commission.

Key Responsibilities of the COC include:

- Reviewing Project Plans and Expenditures - Evaluating proposed projects to ensure they align with scientifically supported methods for reducing pollution and restoring water quality, and recommending adjustments or additions to the plan based on new research and environmental needs.
- Ensuring Fiscal Responsibility - Monitoring the proper allocation and spending of the sales tax revenue, ensuring funds are used efficiently and as intended, and providing oversight on the cost-effectiveness and return on investment for water quality projects.
- Public Transparency and Accountability - Conducting regular (monthly) public meetings to hear from the community, review updates on progress and challenges, and publish annual reports detailing project performance, financial expenditures, and environmental improvements.
- Advising the County Commission - Making recommendations to the Brevard County Commission regarding funding decisions, project priorities, and policy adjustments.

The COC's oversight helps maintain public trust, ensuring that the Indian River Lagoon restoration efforts remain effective, science-based, and financially responsible.

The County Commission has authority to change the structure or functions of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee by amending County Ordinance 2016-15 through the typical public hearing process, as long as the changes are consistent with the 2016 ballot language and municipal interlocal agreements for the surtax.

Staff Recommended Action:

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject CEER #2025070, as it does not enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of County government as required by Home Rule Charter as detailed in the staff analysis.

CC: Frank Abbate, County Manager

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2025 12:33 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2025070

Recommendation # 2025070

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2025070 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization

Name Susan B Connolly
Address 3901 Dixie Hwy NE #102, Palm Bay FL 32905
Phone (865) 924-4238
Email sbconnolly@aol.com
Alternate Email

Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID 2025070
Recommendation Title Resilient Restoration of Indian River Lagoon
Areas Affected natural resources, tourism
Department Affected
Current problem In 2024 there were 52 wastewater spills in the Central Indian River Lagoon watershed and 9 of these directly into the lagoon. Spill volumes ranged from 50 gallons to 1.33 million gallons, including untreated and partially treated wastewater.
Recommendation Revise the mission of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon City Oversight Committee to an Indian River Lagoon Solution Board with the main function to restore resiliency of the IRL. The Board could serve as a clearinghouse for receiving, reviewing, and recommending to the County Commission programs and actions that are root-cause solutions that would restore our IRL and serve in a preventative capacity for the future. The Board could be a collaboration of county commissioners, citizens, businesses, professionals and all who are ready for resolution rather than remediation. The successful results of this entity would be comprehensive and complete and affect our entire ecosystem. The purpose would be for sustainable, long-term actions within a short-term time frame.
Attachments No Documents were attached.

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