



October 28, 2024

Brevard County
Board of County Commissioners
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, FL 32940

Re: Water Resource Availability and Strategic Growth

Chair Steele, Vice Chair Pritchett, and Commissioners Feltner, Goodson, and Tobia:

We write to you as fellow leaders working to encourage Florida's continued growth and economic prosperity. Our shared missions are to encourage continued economic growth through strategic investments in infrastructure, natural resources, and workforce development to support our quality of life. Those investments include resources to provide ample capacity to store, treat, and convey clean water to Floridians and Florida businesses -- especially the commercial space industry. Therefore, we must work together with the space industry to ensure the availability of water resources so that Florida remains at the cutting edge of spaceflight and spaceflight technology development.

Since Cape Canaveral was first selected as a site for the nation's space mission in the mid-twentieth century, the State of Florida has brought to bear all available policy and financial mechanisms to support the aerospace industry's growth and expansion. Over the years, Brevard County has been a strong partner in supporting this critical state interest. Rest assured, your continued support for the growth of this vital industry will be met by our agencies through funding opportunities, technical assistance, and continued collaboration as the space industry looks to grow its presence in Florida.

Brevard County leads the state with 15,508 aerospace industry jobs—33% of all aerospace jobs in Florida—at the end of 2023. Those jobs pay an average annual wage of more than \$130,000—more than double the average annual wage for all other industries in Brevard County. Moreover, the industry has experienced significant, continuous growth since 2014. The growth of the space industry in your county is remarkable, and this industry is a significant part of what makes your county and our state the place that so many people have chosen to live, work, and play.

Florida's continuing success is bolstered by state investments in the success of our local communities. Communities ultimately benefit from the support the state provides when it comes to creating jobs and giving Floridians the tools they need, not only to succeed, but to live and thrive in this great state.

And to be proud to call Florida home.

To that end, our state has made unprecedented investments in infrastructure, water resource management, workforce training, and to support our air, sea, and space ports. Each of our agencies have worked tirelessly with local governments and private industry to build partnerships and cut through bureaucratic red tape.

Governor Ron DeSantis' direction to us has been clear: move forward and grow that unprecedented momentum, to push our great state to new heights. In 2023, the Governor directed \$100 million for four consecutive years to water quality improvements for the Indian River Lagoon. That funding was received in 2023 – and again in 2024. As the aerospace industry continues to grow in Brevard County, the State of Florida recognizes the importance of ensuring the region can maintain ample capacity in its wastewater system to support growth in all sectors. To that end, the Department of Environmental Protection stands ready to review and fund projects that qualify for these funds to ensure the county may continue to increase its capacity for wastewater while meeting the state's notable goals of preserving the Indian River Lagoon, the most biologically diverse estuary in North America.

The Department of Environmental Protection continues to work to support the aerospace industry's ability to meet Florida's water quality standards—standards that would easily be met if the county committed to allowing the industry to utilize available wastewater capacity. That cooperation will be met with continued support from the State of Florida in financially supporting long-term infrastructure needs to accommodate water capacity needs.

The Governor also has continued to direct state-level involvement in educating and attracting advanced manufacturing talent through deployment of workforce and infrastructure dollars. In addition to Brevard County having received over \$11 million in funds from FloridaCommerce, the County has actual and planned investments totaling over \$668 million by FDOT through 2029 and the county and cities have received over \$213 million in funds from the Department of Environmental Protection. If we look to the Space Coast as a whole, that number becomes even more staggering – more than \$2 billion in funds have been awarded or are planned through 2029 to support infrastructure and job creation in the Volusia, Brevard, and Indian River region.

In 2023, an independent study undertaken by the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast laid out recommendations for continued growth on the Cape. The ultimate recommendation – and longest and most costly to implement – is to build a new regional facility on the mainland, and to divert flows from all six existing facilities to the new regional facility.

We do not dispute the long-term need, or the recommendations provided by the study. Rather, we encourage the County to examine all possible options, including the current value of using its existing and available excess wastewater treatment capacity to encourage job creation in Florida's critical industries.

To be clear, as illustrated in the June 2023 study commissioned by the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast entitled "Conceptual Alternatives Evaluation for Cape Canaveral Space Force Station Wastewater Treatment Options," the County currently has sufficient available wastewater treatment capacity to support expanding space industry operations on the Cape. Contrary to that finding, however, we have learned that the County has denied increased wastewater processing needs requested by members of the commercial space industry – when those increases will expand the industry, create new jobs, and bolster Florida's leadership in advanced manufacturing. Meanwhile, the

State of Florida has provided historic levels of funding to support water quality and capacity. This includes additional funding through the state's resiliency funding for coastal areas susceptible to flooding and tropical weather.

The state supports the expansion of the space industry in Florida and in Brevard County. The County should immediately revisit its decision not to permit more wastewater capacity, for immediate potential space industry projects, and for the projects that will inevitably follow. Should the County do so, and thereby further strengthen Florida's space industry, then we as state agency leaders will remain confident in the funding we have deployed and plan to deploy to the County through various state funding mechanisms.


FloridaCommerce, alongside unified state partners—including the Florida Department of Transportation, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Education, and Space Florida—remains eager to build on our collective efforts to support continued growth and investment in Brevard County. Our agencies want to partner with the county to pursue a common-sense, long-term vision of business growth and development. To that end, we stand ready to explore targeted funding and other support to ensure that the County's wastewater facilities are maintained or expanded to accommodate this growing economic need.


We want to meet with you soon to discuss the space industry in Florida and Brevard County, the Governor's historic investments in water and wastewater in the region, how we can provide technical assistance in submitting applications for grant funding—including for water quality improvements to the Indian River Lagoon—and how we can work together to maintain Florida and Brevard County's status as the preeminent destination for the space industry.

Sincerely,


J. Alex Kelly
Secretary
FloridaCommerce


Robert Long
President & CEO
Space Florida


Jared W. Perdue, P.E.
Secretary
Florida Department of Transportation


Manny Diaz
Commissioner
Florida Department of Education


Shawn Hamilton
Secretary
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Cc: Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nunez, Chair, Space Florida