



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

County Manager's Office
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VIA CERTIFIED MAIL: 7020 1810 0001 3178 9828

November 5, 2024

J. Alex Kelly
Secretary
Florida Department of Commerce
107 East Madison Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Secretary Kelly, Secretary Perdue, Secretary Hamilton, Commissioner Diaz, and Mr. Long:

We are in receipt of your October 28, 2024, letter regarding water resources availability and strategic growth in Brevard County. First, let me state that we strongly share the common view of continued economic growth in Brevard County especially associated with and in the Space related sector. However, having read your letter, I feel that there are important points that may not have been conveyed to you and wish to take this opportunity to brief you on the history and what Brevard County is currently doing to work with Space Florida for the short and long term.

The discussion of additional wastewater capacity needed due to the growth at KSC associated with Space Florida and of the option of connecting into the Brevard County collection system has been going on for over 6 years. Enclosed is a letter dated August 16, 2024, from Brevard County Utilities to Rob Long, Space Florida. As detailed in that letter, Brevard County has been and continues to be open and willing to collaborate with Space Florida to explore connecting into the Brevard County wastewater system at our Sykes Creek facility. As we have expressed throughout the 6 years of conversations with Space Florida, there is due diligence required to assure that any agreement between the County and Space Florida define roles, responsibilities, and fair cost allocations. Brevard County has sought this due diligence. This includes, at a minimum; establishing the level of industrial pretreatment required prior to flows being sent to the Sykes Creek wastewater treatment plant, establishing the ultimate wastewater flow from Space Florida to the Brevard County system, and establishing each parties' responsibilities, including costs. Not performing this due diligence could leave Brevard County and our rate payers exposed to substantial duplicative, unplanned, and unforeseen costs as we move forward.

The level of industrial wastewater pre-treatment needs to be established to ensure that any flows received by Brevard County are compatible to our wastewater treatment facility. Not doing so would be a Florida Department of Environmental Protection permit violation, potentially leading to a consent order. Although revising the permit language may be an option that we continue to be willing to explore, it does not protect Brevard County for perpetuity with the State's environmental laws.

We currently have capacity at the Sykes Creek wastewater treatment plant, however three independent studies performed, on behalf of the County, show that the treatment plant will be at its maximum capacity within the next 10 years. This is due to increased development growth in Merritt Island, the expansion of our septic tank to sewer conversions on Merritt Island, and recent State laws promoting septic to sewer conversions in Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP) areas. Being located within the Indian River Lagoon BMAP these initiatives are critical for Merritt Island on our efforts to protect and enhance the Indian river Lagoon.

We acknowledge, the Sykes Creek treatment plant does have capacity today. Sykes Creek, however, is projected to be at capacity within 10 years without any flow from KSC/Space Florida. We have asked Space Florida to work with us on how we can transition KSC/Space Florida from sending their flows from the Brevard County Sykes Creek facility ultimately to another alternate location over this ten-year period, so we can continue to address the increase of sewer and septic to sewer connections on Merritt Island. The Sykes Creek wastewater treatment plant, with the capacity it has today, was designed, built, and paid in full by Brevard County rate payers with the intent to service the Merritt Island community, not including or anticipating Kennedy Space Center flows.

Without an agreement between Space Florida and Brevard County to transition flows long term, any future treatment plant expansion will be a burden that will fall on Brevard County rate payers who have already paid for that service. This would result at an estimated cost at least 5 times more than what it cost the County to expand the treatment plant 30 years ago. Notwithstanding this information, neither the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners nor Brevard County staff have denied increased wastewater processing needs requested by members of the commercial space industry. All we have asked for is due diligence before proceeding.

As this issue of additional treatment capacity was brought forth again recently, Brevard County has taken an active lead to establish short- and long-term solutions involving the growth at KSC/Space Florida. Our Utility Services Department staff are meeting monthly with Space Florida's staff to define the due diligence needed and to assess the progress of such. Our Utility Services Department has hired Hazen Engineering, a national engineering firm specializing in wastewater projects, to be involved throughout for their input, feedback and to provide support in the evaluation of the due diligence.

To secure a long-term solution that will meet everyone's need, the County has partnered with the Space Coast Economic Development Commission in obtaining a \$750,000 grant from the Department of Defense a Military Installation Resilience program to access transferring all wastewater flows from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station's wastewater facility to a future facility to be located in the vicinity of Port St John, Florida. The estimated professional services fee to conduct this study is \$2.5M. Brevard County has submitted for a \$1.25M Florida Department of Environmental Protection Resiliency Planning grant and are waiting for their decision. In the meantime, the County has already received approval from our County Board of Commissioners that if the grant is not approved, to proceed with the study and for the supplemental cost to be funded by the County's Utility Services Department. This study will detail the means, methods, and cost for a long-term solution to best serve KSC/Space Florida and Brevard County residents and facilitate the desired space industry economic growth.

Notably, this study is being undertaken by Brevard County and will benefit Space Florida, the State of Florida, or any other members of the Space industry. We trust this initiative shows our firm commitment to move forward in a way that best serves our community and the Space Industry long term. Considering your letter, we are optimistic that the State, State agencies and Space Florida will support this important long-term initiative and assist us to obtain the necessary resources to accomplish this critical need.

In closing, Brevard County welcomes the leadership of Governor DeSantis, Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nunez, Space Florida, and your State Agencies to discuss and partner with us to achieve and meet the goals of Brevard County and the State of Florida.

Respectfully,



Frank Abbate
County Manager

cc: Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nunez, Chair, Space Florida
Rita Pritchett, District 1 Brevard County Commissioner
Tom Goodson, District 2 Brevard County Commissioner
John Tobia, District 3 Brevard County Commissioner
Rob Feltner, District 4 Brevard County Commissioner
Jason Steele, District 5 Brevard County Commissioner
John Denninghoff, Assistant County Manager, Brevard County
Morris Richardson, County Attorney, Brevard County
Edward Fontanin, Utility Services Director, Brevard County