



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 1602, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Request for the Board of County Commissioners to send a letter to the Nature Conservancy requesting that they conduct a poll for an EEL referendum item.

Fiscal Impact:

None

Dept/Office:

District 5 Commission Office

Requested Action:

It is requested that the BOCC sends a letter to the Nature Conservancy requesting that they conduct a poll for an EEL referendum item to determine how many voters would vote in favor of small ad valorem to fund the EEL.

Summary Explanation and Background:

The Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program runs out of funding in 2024 with the expiration of the small ad valorem tax from a 2004 referendum. The 2004 referendum was passed by approximately 70% of the voters. The operating costs of maintaining approximately 17,000 acres of nature sanctuaries and managing three education centers totals \$2.35 Million annually. This amount is considered too large to move into the General Fund so the best alternative requires another referendum measure to continue operations for another twenty years.

This referendum approach could be utilized this November or November 2022. The 2020 date is preferred for several reasons including the opportunity to try again if 2020 fails.

The Nature Conservancy has offered to utilize their resources to conduct a poll for an EEL Program referendum item. This poll would show how many voters would expect to vote in favor of continuing a small ad valorem to fund the EEL Program. The poll would also determine which aspects of the program do the voters consider most valuable. The Nature Conservancy is willing to fund this effort at no cost to Brevard County but they want a letter from the Commission requesting this help.

The poll will serve two primary purposes. First, it will allow the BOCC to make an informed decision regarding placing a referendum item on the November ballot. This decision must be reached by August 17, 2020. Next, this information provides the basis for a communications campaign to inform the voters. A political action committee will be formed and run by volunteers to inform the voters on this matter.

The plan would be to conduct the poll in late June and have results for the Commission by mid-July. Similar polling was utilized in 2016 regarding the sales tax increase to restore the Lagoon, and it accurately predicted the voter approval of the referendum item.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

None