



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 1351, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Adoption of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan 2020 Update unanimously recommended by the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizens Oversight Committee

Fiscal Impact:

The recommended plan update recognizes an \$8 million increase in total revenues to be generated by the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Surtax over its 10-year life (from \$488 million to \$494 million) and allocates \$55,500,516 of previously unallocated revenue to projects. The increased allocation is broken down as follows:

- \$0.6 million for wastewater treatment plant upgrades to reduce nutrients in reclaimed water;
- \$3.1 million for nutrient reductions at wastewater infiltration basins and spray-fields;
- \$0.5 million for smoke testing to find leaks in public and private sewer infrastructure;
- \$28.1 million for additional septic to sewer projects;
- \$7.7 million for upgrades to advanced septic where sewer service is not available;
- \$8.1 million for new priority stormwater treatment projects;
- \$1.9 million for muck removal;
- \$3.1 million for treating interstitial water during muck removal; and
- \$2.6 million as 5% contingency for the increased project allocations.

After accounting for actual collections to date, assuming 1.8% growth in revenue over the remaining life of the tax, allocating an additional \$55.5 million in the 2020 update, and incorporating a 3.25% construction index rate for projects, \$6 million remains unallocated and available to offset economic uncertainty or fund future project opportunities.

Dept/Office:

Natural Resources Management

Requested Action:

Adopt the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan 2020 Update, as recommended by the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee (Oversight Committee) on January 17, 2020, and authorize associated budget change requests for the current fiscal year.

Summary Explanation and Background:

Each year, in order to account for new information and opportunities, the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Citizen Oversight Committee is tasked with recommending an Update to the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan (SOIRLPP). The Committee has held monthly public meetings throughout the year to keep informed, gather ideas from the community, review potential changes, and recommend an annual plan update to the County Commission. The Committee's annually recommended SOIRLPP Updates are posted on the

Committee's webpage for public access at least 15 days prior to being brought to the County Commission for consideration. The County Commission may adopt or modify the Committee's recommended Plan Update.

A workshop was held with cities on August 26th, 2019 to review the process for submitting project requests to be considered for addition in the 2020 annual update. Project requests were due October 28th. Year 4 Project Submissions listed in the summary table (attached) were reviewed by the Committee during a December 13th public meeting. New projects that were recommended in December, as well as other changes based on new information gathered and analyzed throughout the year, were incorporated into the attached Draft Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan 2020 Update, as recommended by the Committee on January 17th.

The 2020 Update (attached) includes 43 new projects bringing the total number of projects recommended for funding to 242. The plan also includes updates and refinements on a number of project types. To help readers find all areas of the SOIRLPP that contain proposed updates or modifications, the attached Draft 2020 Update uses yellow highlighted text, table and figure captions to indicate additions and revisions. Significant updates include:

- refinement of stormwater treatment priorities using updated loading estimates from more recent land use, rainfall, evapotranspiration data as well as updated catchment basin delineations and stormwater infrastructure geolocations;
- addition of vegetative harvesting as a method to reduce nutrient loads reaching the lagoon;
- information on an enhanced circulation pilot study being conducted by Florida Institute of Technology with funding from the Florida Legislature;
- information on physical and ecological modeling underway to evaluate the potential benefits of replacing some of the Highway 520 and 528 causeways with bridge spans;
- more detailed muck flux data at several priority sites;
- literature values for the nutrient removal benefits of clam aquaculture and harvest, making it possible to consider funding clam projects in the 2021 Update; and
- a detailed list in Table 9-8 of every funded project in the plan with its eligible cost share, nutrient reduction benefit and estimated cost effectiveness.

During fiscal year 18/19, tax collections were \$47.4 million instead of the budgeted estimate of \$46.6 million. This growth that exceeded the consumer price index led to consideration of whether the 10-year forecast of revenue collections should be increased. Using actual revenues collected in 2016 through 2019 and the state's latest consumer price index of 1.8%, the estimate of 10-year collections was increased in the 2020 Update from \$486 million to \$494 million. Revenue forecasting adjustments will continue to be considered as part of the annual Plan Update process.

The original distribution of funds between project types was guided by best available data in 2016 regarding the relative significance of nitrogen loading from each major contributing source of pollution to the Indian River Lagoon. The recommended changes in the 2020 update represent a continued shift in emphasis away from muck dredging and toward human wastewater related projects and stormwater treatment, as illustrated in the Adaptive Management Chart (attached). The original Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan allocated 65% of the funding to muck removal projects. The 2020 Update reduces the proportion of funds for muck removal to 27% although 11% is allocated to stripping nutrients from the interstitial water. This shift in funding emphasis is also illustrated in the Figure 81 pie charts of the 2020 Update (attached).

Available funding is divided between projects that **reduce** the incoming load of new pollution, **remove** accumulations of old pollution, **restore** natural stabilization and filtration systems, or facilitate processes to **respond** to new information. In the 2020 Update, \$182 million (45%, up from 24% in the original plan) is directed to projects that improve the treatment of human waste through upgraded treatment of reclaimed water, nutrient removal from treatment plant spray-fields and rapid infiltration basins, smoke testing to identify leaky sewer infrastructure, conversion of septic neighborhoods to sewer service, connection of septic homes to adjacent sewer lines, and upgrade of high-risk conventional septic to advanced septic systems. This focus on human waste sources of pollution is also illustrated in Figure 81.

The sum of the 2020 recommended changes brings the total Save Our Indian River Lagoon Project Plan cost to \$488 million when a Construction Index of 3.25% is factored into the project costs for years 2 through 10 as shown in Table 99b from the 2020 Update. This represents a total cost of \$429 million without inflation. Approximately \$6 million of projected revenues over the 10-year life of the sales tax remain available for future allocation.

In 2019, the County Commission recommended that the Citizen Oversight Committee reduce the allocation to muck projects by approximately \$100 million. About half that amount was reallocated in the adopted 2019 Update while \$46.8 million was left to be allocated in the 2020 Update when additional data would be available and when county, municipal and community partners would have an opportunity to submit additional project requests. The 2020 Update, unanimously recommended by the Citizen Oversight Committee, fully allocates the remainder of the \$100 million muck reduction, with the majority share going to wastewater treatment.

On December 13, 2019, the Citizen Oversight Committee also unanimously voted to endorse the County Commission creating an ordinance that would mandate the repair of leaky sewer laterals county-wide. Unless repairs are made, smoke testing to find infrastructure deficiencies is not an effective tool for reducing sewage overflows or groundwater pollution.

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

N/A