
**SEMINOLE COUNTY GOVERNMENT
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: Legislative Update

DEPARTMENT: County Manager Office

DIVISION: Business Office - CMO

AUTHORIZED BY: Joe Forte

CONTACT: Sabrina O'Bryan

EXT: 7224

MOTION/RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is seeking direction from the Board on Federal Legislative Priorities.

County-wide

Sabrina O'Bryan

BACKGROUND:

Annually, the Board determines projects that have the highest priority for seeking Federal funding. Staff coordinates with our Federal lobbyist to prepare letters of support to our congressional members. The proposed projects for consideration by the Board are as follows:

State Road 46 - Regional Evacuation Route

Regional Surface Water Facility at Yankee Lake

The Board also determines the top federal legislative issues for monitoring. Staff recommends the following for the Boards consideration:

- Oppose unfunded mandates or any bills that preempt local government authority.
- Support funding of federal grant programs for public safety, emergency management, and affordable housing.
- **Three (3%) Percent Withholding Tax on County Purchases: SUPPORT** repealing requirement for counties beginning in 2011 to withhold federal taxes on payments for services or products.
- **Federal Benefits for Eligible Medicaid and Medicare Eligible Prisoners: SUPPORT** allowing persons charged and incarcerated, but not convicted, to continue to be eligible for federal medical benefits until such time as they may be convicted and sentenced to a prison facility.
- **Airport & Aviation Reauthorization: SUPPORT** reauthorization of federal airport and aviation programs.
 - Airport Improvement Program
 - Rural Airports
- **Transportation Reauthorization: SUPPORT** reauthorization of federal transportation programs.
 - Distribution formula

- Mass transit/Rail
- **Access to Federal Contracts: SUPPORT** expanding authorization for local governments to use approved federal contracts and vendors to include conservation and green projects.
- **Water Quality - Clean Water Restoration Act: SUPPORT** legislation that:
 - Clarifies the basis and scope of the Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction, including a more descriptive definition of the jurisdictional waters included within the term;
 - Maintains Congress' policy and CWA provisions that recognize, preserve, and protect the primary responsibilities and rights of states to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution and to plan for the development and use (including restoration, preservation, and enhancement) of land and water resources;
 - Establishes specific standards that protect wetlands having significant ecological functions or hydrological connection to navigable waters;
 - Clarifies that CWA jurisdiction does not include isolated, intrastate, non-navigable waters such as isolated ponds, ditches, and other channels containing intermittent or ephemeral water flows occurring during less than 3 months of the year as "navigable waters" or "waters of the United States"; and
 - Relies upon CWA jurisdiction under Congress' commerce power to accomplish the objectives of the CWA and does not add the phrase "activities affecting such waters" to the definition of "navigable waters" or "waters of the United States".

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is seeking direction from the Board on Federal Legislative Priorities.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Seminole County Proposed Letters re: Federal Priorities

Additionally Reviewed By: No additional reviews

SUGGESTED DRAFT LETTER

The Honorable John Mica
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Kosmas
238 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Corrine Brown
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George LeMieux
356 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative/Senator -----:

As Congress prepares to begin work on appropriations legislation for FY 2011, I am writing to bring to your attention Seminole County's federal funding requests for the upcoming year.

STATE ROAD 46 – REGIONAL EVACUATION ROUTE (SR 415 TO CR 426)

The County respectfully requests \$2 million under the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation account in the FY 2011 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill for the design of State Road 46, which expands State Road 46 to 4-lanes from State Road 415 to County Road 426. With your help, this project received \$500,000 in FY 2008.

Widening State Road 46 would significantly improve travel on a regional basis and provide an upgraded hurricane evacuation route. The total cost of the project is \$106 million, with the cost breakdown as follows: design - \$7 million; right-of-way - \$25 million; and construction and inspection - \$74 million. The project in Seminole County was approved and adopted by the Metro Plan Orlando Board in 2009 as part of the Long Range Plan year 2030.

The County expects the funds to be provided by the Florida Department of Transportation which would be the agency to implement the project since it is a State roadway and serves traffic on a regional basis. As an evacuation route, it directly serves Orange, Seminole, Volusia and Brevard Counties. Indirectly, it would serve as a primary or secondary route for other coastal Counties along the east coast of Florida.

REGIONAL SURFACE WATER FACILITY AT YANKEE LAKE

The County respectfully requests \$2 million under the Army Corps of Engineers Construction Account (219 project) in the FY 2011 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill for a Regional Surface Water Facility at Yankee Lake. In addition, the County requests \$500,000 under the State and Tribal Assistance Grant account in the FY 2011 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill for the project.

The project is addressed in the Seminole County Comprehensive Plan and St. John's River Water Management District Water Supply Plan. The 2007 Water Resources Development Act (P.L. 110-114) included the "East Central and Northeast Florida" provision which authorized projects like this in Seminole County. This authorization allows the Corps of Engineers to partner with the County and perform work on the project.

Funds requested would go toward the construction of a new regional alternative water treatment facility allowing Seminole County and other Central Florida regional utilities to meet state initiatives to reduce the reliance on groundwater. This new facility will include a river intake, raw water pump station, and a pipeline to convey the raw water from the St. Johns River to the new treatment facility. The project will reduce Seminole County's reliance on fresh groundwater by increasing the production of reclaimed water and will protect the Wekiva Basin springflow.

The total cost for this project is \$68 million. The County was awarded \$7.5 million by the St. Johns River Water Management District, through the Florida Water Protection and Sustainability Program, the purpose of which is to provide cost-share funding for construction of alternative water supply projects. Seminole County is prepared to provide the remaining \$56.5 million in matching funds.

On behalf of Seminole County, we are very appreciative of your representation and work on our behalf. We look forward to working with you throughout the year. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact our Washington representatives Skip Bafalis or Jim Davenport at 703-841-0626 or Joseph Forte, Interim County Manager at 407-665-7210.

Sincerely,

Bob Dallari, Chairman

cc: Skip Bafalis & Jim Davenport, Alcalde & Fay