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RLSA Workshop Statement 2/22/18

There are several topics important to decision-making on changes to the RLSA program that do not appear in the schedule. The workshops need to include these topics. To name 3:

### 1. Water Resources

The County should include discussion of how the proposed development impact will our water resources and how the GMP can be revised to include explicit elements that will protect our water resources. We are all downstream of the proposed development and so are important natural resources such as Camp Keais Strand, Picayune Strand, Naples Bay, 10,000 islands. The rural lands provide water storage and groundwater recharge—so important for our water supply, water quality and flood protection.

### 2. NRI

The County should discuss Group 1 policies 1.8 and 1.9 that concern the NRI. **This index—developed by WilsonMiller in 2000—is based on outdated information and should be revised to consider new information: two panther studies and the 2008 Panther Recovery Plan.**

The 2002 NRI assigned a low natural resource value to agricultural land and disturbed lands, which in turn affected the number of credits for these lands and also the determination of which lands should be preserved. At the time of developing the NRI, WilsonMiller acknowledged that use of agricultural fields by panthers was not well understood and, in discussing the NRI, acknowledged that the science was continuing to evolve. In its 2002 Immokalee Study Area Stage 1 Report WilsonMiller said: “The analyses involving panther habitat for the Study will be complemented by ongoing computer modeling of potential habitat and development of an updated panther recovery plan by interagency committees led by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.” Pg. 14.

We now have the NEW 2008 Panther Recovery Plan and two studies by panther experts based on years of telemetry data. The panther studies found that active agricultural fields and open areas in some cases are highly valuable to panthers; and identified primary and secondary panther habitat in the RLSA. All of these studies and reports agree that the primary panther habitat zone should be preserved because this land is critical to the long-term survival of the panther. See Kautz, et al. (2006);Frakes et al. (2015).

Discuss revision of the NRI.

**[Mr. Van Lengen said that they would come back to Policy 1 and get to the NRI at the end of the workshops. If the NRI is to be revised, this needs to be determined early on in the process because a change in NRI values**

**will result in other changes in the program. For this reason, I don't think it is a good idea to wait until the end to talk about the NRI.]**

### 3. Infrastructure

The workshops should include a discussion of infrastructure—what will be required to meet level of service requirements for such things as roads, schools, WWTPs, Water Plants, EMS. What will the infrastructure cost and Who will pay? How much additional acreage will have to be developed to accommodate the infrastructure? The costs are something that impacts all residents of Collier County; include discussion of infrastructure in the workshops.