



2024

# State and Federal Legislative and Administrative Priorities



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## INTRODUCTION

This document was produced based on prior Board direction, legislative and project needs identified by County staff in support of Board-approved programs and projects, ongoing or unresolved legislative and administrative issues from 2023, and legislative priorities shared with the [Florida Association of Counties](#) (FAC) and the [National Association of Counties](#) (NACo).

Our state and federal contract lobbyists provide valuable input throughout this process and work very hard to continually identify and monitor legislative trends, issues, administrative activity, and funding opportunities throughout the year.

Once reviewed and approved by the Board of County Commissioners, the County's legislative and administrative priorities guide all advocacy efforts in Tallahassee, FL, and Washington, DC, for the upcoming year.

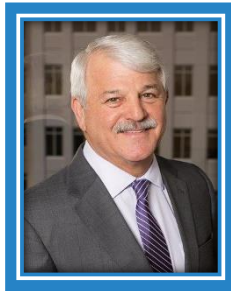
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**Vision:** To be the best community in America to live, work and play.

**Mission:** To deliver high quality, best-value, public services, programs, and facilities to meet the needs of our residents, and businesses today and tomorrow.

**Values:** Leadership, Ethics, Accountability, Dedication and Service.

**Motto:** Exceeding expectations, every day!



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# Priorities: Legislative & Administrative

## Affordable Housing

**Summary:** Support an increase in funding and provide for statutory relief for the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program. This program serves as the largest federal block grant to state and local jurisdictions for the development and preservation of housing that is affordable for the persons with low and moderate incomes, including veterans, seniors, individuals with disabilities/special needs and persons experiencing homelessness. Support proposals, tax incentives, and funding which would increase home ownership and rental housing opportunities for low- to moderate- income (LMI) individuals and families, and work with state and federal partners on policies that would seek to increase the supply of such housing. The impact of Hurricane Ian compounded this issue by reducing housing availability options and causing both temporary and permanent relocation of many with significantly damaged or destroyed housing.

**Action:** (STATE/FEDERAL) Work with the state and federal delegations to broadly address supply and demand issues for housing that is affordable in Southwest Florida.

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## County Funding Streams

**Summary:** Full funding of grants and continued appropriations for programs or funds applicable to Collier County, including but not limited to Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Airport Improvement Program (AIP), Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG), Stafford Act, Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAGP), FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, Rainy Day Fund, Local Housing Trust Fund, Sadowski Act- funded programs including the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) and State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding, the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF), and the Rural Development Grant Program.

**Action:** (STATE/FEDERAL) Advocate for full funding of grants and continued appropriations for programs or funds applicable to Collier County and oppose state or federal actions that would utilize moneys for other purposes than originally intended.

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## FEMA Remapping

**Summary:** Expedited approval is needed for the Collier County flood remapping process which is ten years behind schedule. Two-thirds of Collier County’s population is represented by outdated maps. The two Physical Map Revisions (PMR) are in the final stages of mapping production. FEMA Region IV has not indicated a release date for the preliminary maps PMR-1 and PMR-2 at this time. The preliminary maps for the Southwest Florida Coastal Study that were released by FEMA on December 31, 2019, have been completed and will require adoption by the community on or before February 8, 2024. PMR-1 and PMR-2 will then be *merged* with the Coastal Study to produce the *final* map product.

**Action:** (FEDERAL) Continue to support increases in funding for the Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis Program that support this process. During the 2024 cycle, engage agency officials and the congressional delegation to prompt expedited FEMA approval of the County’s final flood remapping product.

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## Hurricane Preparedness & Recovery

**Summary:** The response to Hurricane Ian resulted in a significant impact on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF). FEMA was projecting the DRF fund would be depleted by late August - a month before the end of the current fiscal year and prior to responding to the Maui Wildfires and Hurricane Idalia. Senators Rubio and Scott sponsored *The Disaster Relief Fund Replenishment Act (S 2029)*, which would provide \$11.5 billion in DRF funding. The Senators also co-authored a letter to FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell dated August 3, 2023, reiterating concerns there may not be adequate resources available to act immediately in response to future incidents. The letter states the bill “will ensure the federal government can uphold its obligation to quickly deploy emergency funding and resources to communities and Americans impacted by natural disasters.”

**Action:** (FEDERAL) Support the passage *The Disaster Relief Fund Replenishment Act (S 2029)* and/or any language incorporated in other legislation that enacts additional funding for the Disaster Relief Fund.



## Hurricane Relief Reimbursement

**Summary:** Based on our experience with Hurricane Ian, we seek additional coordination with FEMA, the Small Business Administration, and Housing and Urban Development to ensure the speedy delivery of recovery resources to our residents who are impacted by future events. With the support of the congressional delegation, prompt FEMA and SBA to work collaboratively with local applicants in the reimbursement process, ensure realistic timeframes for gathering documentation, advocate for an appropriate level of cost-sharing, and provide an efficient communication model for any disagreements or disputes.

**Action:** (FEDERAL) Advocate for a simplified process for counties to file for and capture direct payments for relief efforts. We support the passage of the Disaster Assistance Deadline Act (**S.1858**) and/or any language incorporated in other legislation that enacts the same. Sponsored by Senator Rubio, the Act aligns the deadline for FEMA's Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and Individuals and Household Program (IHP). Currently, the DUA deadline is 30 days and the IHP program is 60 days after a federal disaster declaration. Aligning the two federal disaster application deadlines will further reduce the confusion for disaster survivors.

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## Long-Term, Transparent National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Reauthorization

**Summary:** To seek the long-term reauthorization of the NFIP to provide housing market stability while ensuring transparency and fairness in rate setting. Currently, NFIP authorization is set to expire on September 30, 2023. Future market stability calls for longer reauthorization of at least five years.

**Action:** (FEDERAL) Support legislation that provides long-term extension of NFIP for a minimum five-year authorization, and focus on affordability, efficiency, fairness, accountability, and sustainability of the program. The legislation should also invest in mitigation, modernize flood mapping, and flood risk accuracy, and increase consumer protections in the NFIP and private insurance markets.





## Noise Nuisance Mitigation

**Summary:** Studies show noise has adverse effects on health and quality of life for adults and children. Adverse effects due to environmental noise identified in studies include cardiovascular health, sleep, stress, annoyance, and pregnancy outcomes. Loud vehicle exhaust noise in excess of standards issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) creates a nuisance to individuals and communities. In 1974, the Florida Legislature enacted noise emission limits and other requirements in ss. 403.415 and 316.293, *Florida statutes*, to address motor vehicle and exhaust types. A June 2023 OPPAGA report identified the following options to address the issue: 1) create a Plainly Audible Standard for exhaust noise similar to the standards for music and other noise under Ch. 316, F.S. and/or 2) create a new provision under Ch. 316, F.S. to allow law enforcement to use the nuisance standard to enforce loud exhaust violations and/or 3) establish a Probable Cause Based Decibel Testing Program.

**Action:** (STATE) Work with President Passidomo and the state delegation to enhance enforcement of existing exhaust noise violations and explore new approaches and best practices utilized in other states.

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## Property Insurance Market Stabilization

**Summary:** Efforts to stabilize the Florida property insurance market and return Citizens to its role as Florida's insurer of last resort continue to be a priority. Industrywide reform packages addressing litigation, assignment of benefits (AOB) abuse, and roofing scams have been previously passed by the State Legislature. However, projected insured losses nearing \$60 billion caused by Hurricane Ian and unknown impact from Hurricane Idalia losses continue to contribute to insolvency and policy non-renewals issues plaguing the property insurance market. Currently, more than 1.3 million Citizens' policies have been written for Florida homeowners.

**Action:** (STATE) Advocate for continued reforms to stabilize the property insurance market, monitor carriers' financials and reserve funds, prevent further insolvencies, add growth in market competition, fair and transparent premiums for policyholders, and reduce dependency on the State's insurer of last resort.





## Resilience/Coastal Protection

**Summary:** Because of local terrain and hydrological factors, many Florida communities like Collier County are located on coastlines that are vulnerable to sea level rise. This threat has led the County to plan for actions to mitigate the impact.

**Action:** (FEDERAL) We support federal investments in solutions to mitigate risk and to prepare for the impacts of sea level rise and seek collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers and Federal Emergency Management Agency to do so.

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## Septic-to-Sewer Grant Program Flexibility

**Summary:** Aging septic tank systems and their leaching of effluent are a threat to waterways, the habitats they sustain, and our drinking water quality. Even when conducted in phases, sanitary sewer construction and connection projects are expensive whether it be a densely populated area or a small and/or rural community with fiscal limitations. Residents often incur costly assessments to cover transition to a sanitary sewer system. The Clean Waterways Act of 2020 created a septic-to-sewer grant program that *requires a 50% local match* that may be waived by DEP *only* for rural areas of opportunity. More flexibility is needed including a low-or-no match septic-to-sewer conversion option to expeditiously connect residents to sanitary sewer systems and facilitate proper abandonment of the septic tank.

**Action:** (STATE) – Advocacy for expansion of the existing septic-to-sewer grant program applicable to *planning, design, construction, and connection costs* providing more flexibility for small and/or rural communities.

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## Water Quality and Quantity Management

**Summary:** Local water, wastewater, and stormwater system water quality improvement projects support the protection of our drinking water supply as well as our natural environment and fragile ecosystem. Counties and communities often have budgetary constraints that prevent them from covering the total costs for many needed improvements to aging water, wastewater, and stormwater system infrastructure.

**Action:** (STATE/FEDERAL) – Support water quality and quantity management programs, including tiered funding opportunities for water and public utility infrastructure (including fire hydrant systems), funding and incentives for stormwater system rehabilitation and measurable water quality enhancement, funding for technical and scientific studies to support water quality improvements, and continued funding of opportunities that reduce resident cost in moving from well water to potable water systems.

# State Appropriations Project Requests

## State Veterans' Nursing Home- Supplemental Funding - Outpatient Services- \$15 million



In June, the Board approved the use of an additional \$10 million of Infrastructure Sales Surtax funds to apply toward the construction costs of providing facilities for outpatient services. Though outpatient benefits are provided to veterans, the construction of these facilities is not provided for via the Veterans Administration State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program as part of a new construction project. President Passidomo has agreed to seek matching funding from the State for the construction of additional square footage for this outpatient services facility. The President

may also seek an additional appropriation to supplement the County's previous \$30 million (to be used as the State's construction match for the skilled nursing portion of the facility) to ensure a 65/35 federal and state construction funding ratio remains applicable to the projected cost of a new VA construction grant application. The County and our lobbying contractors will work to garner support for appropriation requests to advance the project and provide our area veterans with much-needed outpatient therapies and adult day health care in addition to inpatient long-term care skilled nursing services and memory care.

## EMS/Fire Station #74 - \$3.6 million



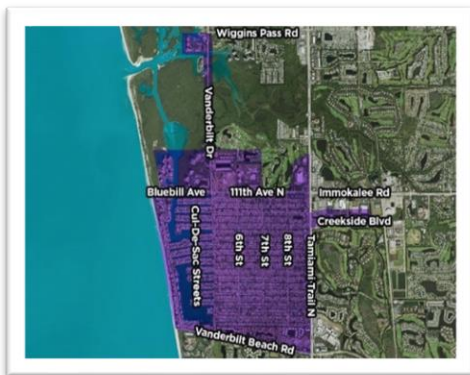
Collier County is committed to bringing compassionate and timely life-saving emergency medical care and fire response to the streets, homes, and workplaces of both residents and visitors. Construction of a new EMS Fire Station in the unincorporated and eastern portion of Collier County will provide protection for the public by providing faster response times for emergency medical services and fire response. This area is experiencing significant growth and has experienced an average 20% increase in call volume over the past year. It will also serve as a focal point for brush fire response in an area that has experienced several expansive brush fires over the last several years. This station will also provide availability of fire and EMS services for the entire county.

## West Goodlette Frank Stormwater Improvements- Phase 2- \$17.9 million



The West Goodlette-Frank Road Area Joint Stormwater Sewer Project (WGF Joint Project) is a joint effort between Collier County Stormwater Management and the City of Naples Utilities Department to address historical problems of street and neighborhood flooding along with septic tank and drain field problems. This project will provide for approximately 1,200 septic conversions. Rehabilitation of 10 miles of stormwater system to improve flood protection and water quality will be completed in comport with City of Naples sanitary sewers and waterline replacement. Design, construction, and restoration costs are shared with the City of Naples.

### Naples Park Public Utilities Renewal Project- 103<sup>rd</sup> & 104<sup>th</sup> Avenues- \$4.5 million



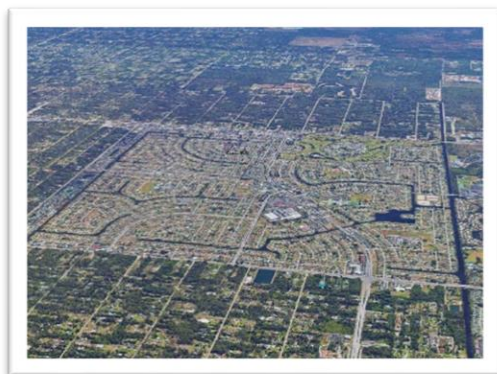
This phase of the Naples Park Public Utilities Renewal Program to replace asbestos cement water mains and clay gravity mains and fire hydrants at the end of useful life, construct a new wastewater pump station, rehabilitate existing wastewater pump stations, and install backflow prevention devices and sewer cleanouts for 400 residents. It will also construct a new storm-water drainage system to improve water quality flow to Vanderbilt Lagoon tidal system, which is connected to the Cocohatchee River, a waterbody included in the list of “Special Waters” in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s “Outstanding Florida Waterbody” water quality standards program.

### Palm River Public Utility Renewal Project- Areas 3, 5 & 6- \$7.5 million



This phase of the Naples Palm River Public Utilities Renewal Program to replace asbestos cement water mains and clay gravity mains and fire hydrants, construct new wastewater pump station, rehabilitate existing wastewater pump stations, and install backflow prevention devices and sewer cleanouts for 300 residents. This phase will also construct a new stormwater drainage system to improve water quality flow to Cocohatchee River, a waterbody included in the list of “Special Waters” in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s “Outstanding Florida Waterbody” water quality standards program.

### Golden Gate Water Reclamation Facility- \$35 million



Construction of 4 MGD water reclamation facility allows conversion of septic to sewer for approx. 25,000 residents/80% of septic parcels in County Sewer District on lots less than one acre. Eight miles of area canals flow into the Golden Gate Canal (GGC) and the Gordon River which is increasingly impaired for fecal bacteria. GGC is the major source of Naples Bay's freshwater but also delivers significant loadings of potential pollutants. The bay abuts “Outstanding Florida Waters” of Rookery Bay and the Gulf. This project will serve the Economic Innovation Zone of Golden Gate City and is the first phase to provide the foundation septic to sewer conversions in Golden Gate City.

# Issues to Monitor

## Agriculture, Environment and Water

### Big Cypress Basin

Any proposed legislation that would change the administrative boundaries of the Big Cypress Basin within the South Florida Water Management District. (STATE)

### Harmful Algal Blooms

Any proposed legislation, appropriation, or administrative action related to research, prevention, and mitigation of harmful algal blooms (HABs), including red tide. (STATE/FEDERAL)

### Lake Okeechobee and Everglades Restoration

Any proposed legislation or administrative action that impacts water storage, treatment, and reservoir conveyance; Everglades restoration and preservation via the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). (STATE/FEDERAL)



Photo courtesy Naples, Marco Island, and the Everglades CVB



### AI Technology

Any potential regulations or implications on county governance, operations, constituent service, privacy and/or security related to Artificial Intelligence (AI). (STATE/FEDERAL)

### American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)

Any proposed legislation or administrative action that restricts ARPA funding flexibility or provides for funding claw backs. (FEDERAL)

### Clerk of the Circuit Court Funding

Any proposed legislation that will provide a sustainable, full funding solution for the Clerk of the Circuit Courts and provide for execution of their extensive statutory and constitutional duties. (STATE)

### Hazardous Waste Disposal Funding / Collection Bills

Any proposed legislation that limits collecting appropriate fees for services. (STATE)

### Home Rule

Any proposed legislation that seeks to preempt or undermine local governmental authority, impose state preemption, creates unfunded mandates, or adversely impacts local funding streams. (STATE/FEDERAL)

### Licensing & Permitting

Any proposed legislation or administrative action that impacts county licensing and permitting and may impact cost and/or time in obtaining. (STATE/FEDERAL)

### Medical Marijuana Dispensaries

Any proposed legislation that might provide more local discretion in dispensary location. (STATE)

### Mental Health & Substance Abuse

Any proposed legislation, appropriation, grant, or program that could enhance Collier County's mental health and substance abuse programs, including the expansion of authority of county court judges to refer defendants for treatment. (STATE/FEDERAL)

### Millage Rates

Any proposed legislation that undermines local government discretion in establishing millage rates. (STATE)





## School Resource Officer / Guardian Program Funding

Any proposed legislation or administrative action regarding funding of the School Resource Officer (SRO) and/or Guardian Program. (STATE)

## Term Limits

Any proposed legislation or amendment to State Constitution to limit terms of office for county commissioners. (STATE)

## Workers Compensation Reform

Any proposed legislation or administrative action that mitigates unfunded liabilities. Reform bills from 2017 through the 2020 Regular Session failed to advance beyond their respective committee assignments. (STATE)



## Energy

### Inland Oil Drilling & High-Pressure Well Stimulation (Fracking)

Any proposed legislation that changes the status of inland oil drilling and high-pressure well stimulation. Currently, high-pressure well stimulation remains essentially unregulated and permissible. (STATE)

### Offshore Drilling

Any proposed legislation or future Executive action regarding the moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling within 125 miles of Florida's Gulf Coast. On September 8, 2020, President Trump signed an Executive Memorandum effectively extending the moratorium until June 30, 2032. The Memorandum also expanded protected areas to include the Atlantic Coast of Florida, and the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. During the 2019 session, the Florida Legislature passed resolutions calling for an *indefinite* extension to the moratorium. In September of 2019 the U.S. House of Representatives passed Congressman Rooney's bipartisan legislation, HR 205, to *permanently* extend the moratorium on oil and gas drilling in the Gulf by a vote of 248-180. With the White House threatening to veto, the Senate did not take up the bill. (FEDERAL)

### Solar, Wind, Fuel Cells, and Biomass

Any proposed legislation regarding the development and implementation of building codes and inspection services to utilize solar, wind, fuel cells and/or biomass systems. Any proposal and/or mandate of new standards that would negatively impact the delivery of power. (STATE/FEDERAL)



## Economic Development and Tourism

### Community Redevelopment Agencies

Any legislation that restricts home rule authority to create, operate, or sunset county CRA's. Legislation was passed during the 2019 session that implemented limited reforms and enhanced ethical training and accountability. Onerous provisions such as requiring a county-wide vote to create a CRA were removed from the bill during consideration. (STATE)

### Southwest Florida Promise Zone / Opportunity Zones

Any proposed legislation or initiative that supports the ten-year economic development mission of the Southwest Florida Promise Zone (SFPZ), originally designated in 2016, or that is helpful in attracting private capital investments to recently established Opportunity Zones. (FEDERAL)

### Short Term Rentals

Any proposed legislation that preempts or otherwise restricts local laws, ordinances, or regulation regarding vacation rental frequency or duration. Ensuring that any legislation provides for local registration of vacation rental properties and designation of local responsible party. (STATE)



## Transportation

### Autonomous Vehicles

Any proposed legislation that would impact local regulation of safety standards for autonomous vehicles and related technology. (STATE/FEDERAL)

### FAA Air Traffic Control Privatization

Any introduced legislation during the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress that would privatize air traffic control services to airports. (FEDERAL)

### I-75 Interchanges

Funding opportunities to improve all I-75 interchanges in Collier County, improving traffic flow and safety for motorists. (STATE/FEDERAL)