



# 2022 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

## Martin County Board of County Commissioners



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# Martin County's Guiding Principles

The ability to maintain home rule and avoid unfunded mandates are central to Martin County's federal and state legislative priorities and advocacy needs, as outlined below. These ideals are championed by both Martin County and the Florida Association of Counties (FAC).

Each year Martin County works alongside FAC during the State Legislative Session to help support FAC's legislative policy statements.

## HOME RULE

Home rule power is conferred to Florida counties by Article VIII, Section 1(f) and 1(g) of the Florida Constitution (1968), and by section 125.01, Florida Statutes. The Martin County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is dedicated to the preservation of this Florida constitutional principle whereby a local government can exercise powers to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. Martin County **SUPPORTS** maintaining the integrity of county home rule power, both administrative and fiscal, which allows counties to develop and implement community-based solutions to local problems and **OPPOSES** any effort to preempt locally elected officials from making fiscal and public policy decisions on behalf of the citizens they represent.

## UNFUNDED MANDATES

While some mandates are justified because they achieve agreed upon policy goals, many are imposed without the consensus of local governments or without providing the resources needed for implementation. Mandates drain the financial lifeblood from local governments and impede their ability to adequately deliver fundamental services required by law.

Martin County **SUPPORTS** the establishment of a deliberative process whereby elected officials evaluate the appropriate funding and the best options for the delivery of services by local, state or the federal government.

## Martin County's State Delegation



Senator  
Gayle Harrell  
*District 25*



Representative  
John Synder  
*District 82*



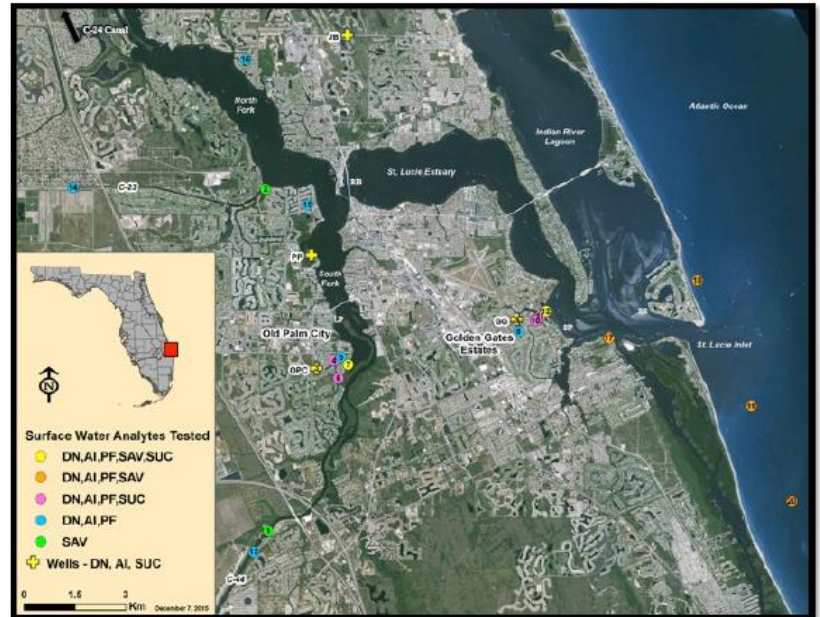
Representative  
Tobin Overdorf  
*District 83*

# Appropriations and State Funding Requests

## Septic to Sewer Conversion

**\$4,000,000**

**REQUEST** funding for Martin County's Septic to Sewer Conversion Program. **REQUEST reoccurring annual septic to sewer funding.** While excessive discharges from Lake Okeechobee, along with local stormwater runoff, are significant threats to the health of our waterways, septic systems also can add to the problem. Leaching of septic tank effluent, especially in high density residential neighborhoods and those close to the water, contributes to the nutrient load in the local waterways. The BOCC is committed to efforts that will restore the health of the St. Lucie Estuary, Indian River Lagoon and near shore coral reef tract. The reduction and elimination of septic systems is one tangible way we can proactively improve the health of our unique environment.



**Fig. 1. Martin County Septic Project Site Map.** Analytes measured at each site are color-coded as indicated by the key. DN = dissolved nutrients, AI = aqueous isotopes, PF = phytoplankton, SAV = submerged aquatic vegetation, SUC = sucralose and acetaminophen. Martin County Department of Health Enterococcus monitoring stations are identified as white letters; LP = Leighton Park, RB = Roosevelt Bridge, SP = Sandsprit Park, and SS = Stuart Sandbar.

## Biosolids

**SUPPORT** establishing a pilot project program for funding new, state of the art wastewater technologies to improve recovery and afford more efficient use of human wastewater biosolids. Excess nutrients from land application of human waste from wastewater treatment effluent, termed “biosolids,” reach surface waters and continue to increase the occurrence of chronic harmful algal blooms (HABs).

## Dedicated Coral Reef Funding & Florida Resilient Coastlines Program

**SUPPORT** efforts and dedicated funding for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to protect and restore the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Tract. **SUPPPORT** efforts and continued dedicated funding for resources to prepare Florida's coastal communities and habitats for the effects of climate change, especially rising sea levels. **SUPPORT** the removal effort of tires placed on the ocean floor in the 1970s. The tires were transplanted to form an artificial reef and attract fish. The tires are now adversely impacting the coral reef tract.

## Beach Nourishment

**SUPPORT** a dedicated annual funding source of a minimum of \$50 million from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, the recognized funding source for the beach program, or any other funding sources identified by the legislature for statewide beach nourishment and inlet management projects to replace the historical doc stamp allocation and trust fund.

# Conservation Land Acquisition

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Acquisition of conservation lands is a foundational element to Martin County's priorities of water quality, open spaces, and quality of life. There are several programs of interest related to land acquisition each of which depend on State and Federal partnerships to effectively achieve results.

The Martin County Blue Ways program provides conservation lands for local basin water quality projects, recreational access to the rivers, the lagoon, and ocean. The Loxa-Lucie program provides a wildlife and



recreation corridor between Halpatiokee, Atlantic Ridge State Park and Jonathon Dickinson State Park that would create a "super park" which would serve as a destination for people and wildlife. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project identified thousands of acres for acquisition to provide natural area water storage and treatment. These areas also contribute to wildlife habitat and large open areas for passive recreation. Acquisition in the PalMar area preserves some of the highest quality wetland in the greater Everglades. This is a critical effort to maintain and restore water quality and timing for the wild and scenic

Loxahatchee River. Land acquisition is in Martin County's legacy. These programs fit very well into several state and federal programs for land acquisition assistance and the county supports active engagement with our state and federal delegation to advance these efforts

**SUPPORT** state funding for PalMar land acquisition and Florida Forever funding for state land acquisition. **SUPPORT** continued dedicated funding for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and **SUPPORT** long-term funding commitments to finance the completion of the projects on the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS), with a priority given to the Indian River Lagoon-South (IRL-S) Project including funding for the C-23/24 and C-25 reservoirs and STAs. **SUPPORT** the land acquisition of the Natural Lands Component of IRL-South, which includes 90,000 acres of wetland restoration.



The Indian River Lagoon-South Restoration Project, part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), was authorized to address the damaging effects of pollution and unnaturally large freshwater discharges and local basin runoff on our ecologically vital water bodies and **its impact to our public health and safety**. The IRL-S Project employs a regional approach to address the Martin and St. Lucie County portions of the lagoon. *The IRL-S Project will greatly reduce polluted freshwater discharges into the St. Lucie River and the Indian River Lagoon.*



## Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRL NEP)

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**SUPPORT** the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program’s legislative priorities.

## Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative (LRPI)

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**SUPPORT** continued funding of projects identified through the LRPI; a partnership of governmental agencies brought together for the common goal of the restoration and enhancement of the Loxahatchee River.

## Economic Development

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**SUPPORT** funding for the REACH Center, Building 17, workforce development center upgrades.

## Additional Priorities

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### Amendment to Tree Trimming Protections

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**SUPPORT** amending Section 163. 045, F.S. , Tree pruning, trimming or removal on residential property to: clarify the meaning of “residential property”, to protect champion and heritage trees, to clarify the meaning of “an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture”, and to clarify what is meant by a “tree presents a danger to persons or property”.

### Community Redevelopment Agency Statutory Authority

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**OPPOSE** legislation aimed at limiting, dismantling or reducing funding for Community Redevelopment Agencies.

### VISIT Florida

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**SUPPORT** full funding at \$75 million for VISIT Florida. **SUPPORT** the reauthorization of VISIT Florida.

### Arts Council Funding

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**SUPPORT** the restoration of legislative funding for arts and culture in Florida.

### Harbor Branch Blue-Green Algae Research

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**SUPPORT** Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute’s blue-green algae research efforts.

### Affordable Housing

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**SUPPORT** the existing state housing trust funds for affordable housing programs, specifically the local S.H.I.P. programs.

# Martin County Legislative Policy Statements

## NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM

**Local Government Infrastructure Surtax:** **SUPPORT** state legislation to amend sales tax laws that allow local government greater flexibility to utilize local option surtax sources for water infrastructure projects.

**Hydraulic Fracturing:** **SUPPORT** a statewide ban on horizontal oil drilling, hydraulic fracturing, acid fracturing and well stimulation performed for the purposes of exploration and production of oil and natural gas in Florida.

**PFAS:** **SUPPORT** state efforts in rulemaking to ensure local governments are not disproportionately impacted for funding cleanups. **SUPPORT** funding for local government response costs. **SUPPORT** research to determine accurate rates of impact to human health and the environment from the presence of PFAS in non-potable groundwater.

**Comprehensive Water Policy:** **SUPPORT** protection of our waterways, water supply and local regulatory authority in any proposed water policies/legislation.

**Statewide Stormwater Treatment Rule:** **SUPPORT** efforts to update the state's Environmental Resource Permitting rule for stormwater design and operations. This rulemaking effort is aimed at minimizing nutrient pollution runoff from stormwater systems.

**Water Quality Research:** **SUPPORT** state funding for public research in order to gather data needed to better understand and track the health of our waterways.

**Lionfish Eradication:** **SUPPORT** legislation that would help fund the eradication of lionfish that impact the Indian River Lagoon.

**Petroleum Storage Tank Compliance Verification Program:** **SUPPORT** the Petroleum Storage Tank Compliance Verification Program at the local program level and maintain the current \$5,900,000 budget level.

**Harmful Algal-Bloom Task Force:** **SUPPORT** funding of **\$1,000,000** statewide, funding priority given to the North Everglades Estuaries to promote the responsibilities of the task force as described in FS. 379.2271.

**Tourism:** **SUPPORT** the legislative priorities of the Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (FADMO).

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT & COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT

**Growth and Development:** **SUPPORT** legislation that promotes quality urban development and redevelopment within our cities, especially new statutory and regulatory incentives for projects that involve infill development, job creation and economic development. **OPPOSE** legislation that would limit the authority of local governments to adopt architectural standards designed to enhance community character and promote quality development or redevelopment.

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

**Small County Dredging Program:** **SUPPORT** changes to Florida Statute 311.22 that would allow FDOT to administer the Small County Dredging program to fund dredging projects in counties having a population of fewer than 300,000; to include shallow draft commercial inlets in the options for approved dredging projects and allow the BOCC to be the direct grant recipient of the program.

**Broadband Infrastructure:** **SUPPORT** increased funding and collaborative efforts for broadband infrastructure needs and protection of municipal broadband networks.

**Indexing Gas Tax:** **SUPPORT** legislation to index local gas taxes to the Consumer Price Index in the same way State gas taxes are determined.



**Historic Preservation:** **SUPPORT** funding for historic preservation.

**Multimodal Transportation:** **SUPPORT** legislation supporting intra-urban and inter-urban multimodal transportation systems throughout Florida. Examples include: bus and other mass transit, passenger rail, pedestrian, bicycle, complete streets, safe mobility and public private partnerships (P3). We also **SUPPORT** locating rail stations and intermodal centers in or adjacent to urban centers, and legislation that would lessen and/or mitigate the negative effects of freight rail traffic and associated facilities on urban centers and the urban redevelopment process.

## FINANCE, TAX & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Tax Reform:** **SUPPORT** tax reform measures that simplify administration and provide an economic boost to Florida's taxpayers, while at the same time considering and minimizing the collective and cumulative negative impact on local revenues, including state shared and local discretionary revenue sources, that are critical to local governments in providing community services.

**Economic Development:** **SUPPORT** measures that empower local governments and provide resources to work with community partners toward the creation of quality jobs and more vibrant Florida communities, as well as an enhanced level of national and global competitiveness.

**Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT):** **SUPPPORT** the comprehensive Payment In Lieu of Taxes programs that offset the impact of lands acquired by federal, state or other tax-exempt entities. PILT programs should be funded in a fashion so as not to diminish the fiscal capacity of small counties. **SUPPORT** legislative consideration of adjusting PILT payments to accommodate the increased value and/or the valued use of the property by the purchasing entity.

**Derelict Vessel Removal:** **SUPPORT** increased assistance to local governments with derelict vessel removal.

**Florida Boating Improvement Program:** **SUPPPORT** increased funding to the Florida Boating Improvement Program.

**Foreign Trade Zone:** **SUPPPORT** Martin County's participation in the transition from a traditional Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) to an Alternative Site Framework for Foreign Trade Zone #135 in partnership with the Port of Palm Beach.

**Targeted Businesses Retention:** **SUPPPORT** legislative changes to the sales factor criteria to allow for the retention of targeted businesses consistent with the Martin County Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption program.

**Affordable Housing:** **SUPPORT** the existing state housing trust funds for affordable housing programs, specifically the local S.H.I.P. programs.

**Impact Fees:** **OPPOSE** legislation that diminishes the ability of counties to levy impact fees without provision for an alternative funding source.

**Property Insurance:** **SUPPPORT** legislation to increase accessibility and decrease cost of windstorm and flood insurance.

**Property Tax Reform:** **SUPPORT** solutions that improve equity and fairness among classes of taxpayers as well as individual taxpayers. Support reasonable limits on the rate of property tax assessment increases. **OPPOSE** any further expansion of homestead exemption.

**TABOR (Taxpayer Bill of Rights):** **OPPOSE** this one-size-fits-all measure that caps state and local government spending and revenue to a defined base amount, adding inflation and population.

**Film/Television Entertainment Production Tax Incentives:** **SUPPORT** legislation that would enhance the current incentives program to support and incentivize local governments to create and maintain a more sustainable and competitive physical and financial environment for attracting film, television, digital and new media-related entertainment production in Florida.

**Florida Retirement System (FRS):** **OPPOSE** any FRS benefit changes that result in an increase in county and county employee FRS contribution rates. **SUPPORT** requiring all legislation that potentially results in an increase in the FRS contribution rate to be analyzed and evaluated to determine the direct fiscal impact of proposed changes to all local and state governments to be eligible for consideration.

**Public Record and Open Meeting Exemptions for Economic Development:** **SUPPORT** changes to s.286.0113 and s.288.075, F.S., which would allow the Board of County Commissioners to deliberate in private regarding economic development proposals and preserve the confidentiality of confidential information in the possession of an economic development agency.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**Low Income Pool/Intergovernmental Transfers (IGT):** **SUPPORT** a system for distributing low income pool dollars that ensures IGT donor counties are able to direct the federal matching dollars generated by their local IGT contributions to best meet the health care needs of their constituents, rather than having those dollars redistributed throughout the state. **For example, in 2014 Martin County contributed \$1.6M in intergovernmental transfers, which generated \$2.3M in federal dollars, for the benefit of Martin Health System.**

**County Share of Cost for Medicaid Services:** **SUPPORT** continued evaluation of the county-state Medicaid cost-share arrangement, taking into consideration the impacts of state policies designed to contain growth in Medicaid costs, including statewide Medicaid managed care and diagnosis-related group reimbursement for hospitals. Additionally, consider possible alternatives to the current arrangement, including but not limited to:

- Alternative financing mechanisms;
- Targeted local investment of the statutory county Medicaid contribution;
- Allocation of state funds to reduce the cost-shift created by the implementation of an enrollment-based formula; and
- Elimination of the unfunded mandate.

**Smoking Regulation:** **SUPPORT** legislation restoring county authority to regulate smoking on county-owned outdoor property. **OPPOSE** efforts to preempt local regulation of tobacco products and other nicotine dispensing devices.

**Healthy Start and Healthy Families:** **SUPPORT** a continuation of funding for the Florida Healthy Start and Healthy Families program.

**County Health Departments (CHD):** **SUPPORT** increasing state general revenue funding for CHDs and **OPPOSE** any state reductions to the CHD Trust Funds. **SUPPORT** restoring funding reductions in operating support for CHDs. **SUPPORT** maintaining a coordinated system of CHDs that is centrally housed within the Department of Health (DOH). **SUPPORT** preserving the ability of CHDs to provide primary care and direct patient care services, particularly in communities without adequate substitutes or alternative providers for these services.

**Trauma Care:** **SUPPORT** legislation to fund the state-mandated Trauma Care System. **OPPOSE** any legislation that would mandate counties to fund the system.

**Community Care for the Elderly:** **SUPPORT** restoration and expansion of state funding for the Community Care for the Elderly program, which provides cost efficient diversion from nursing home placement for impaired elders.

**Graduate Medical Education (GME):** **SUPPORT** efforts to fund GME programs to meet the healthcare needs of the state and its local communities, with an emphasis on programs that provide for specialties in need as well as the development of physicians who practice in medically underserved areas.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**Behavioral Health Services:** **SUPPORT** increased funding for core mental health and substance abuse services and **SUPPORT** efforts to increase supportive housing, employment and education initiatives for people with behavioral health issues and/or disabilities.

**Baker Act/Marchman Act:** **SUPPORT** appropriate funding for crisis mental health and substance abuse beds statewide. **SUPPORT** coordinated efforts to increase access to acute care behavioral health services for individuals and families. **SUPPORT** the establishment of accountability for community mental health/substance abuse providers based upon performance.

**Recovery Residences:** **SUPPORT** legislation defining and establishing minimum regulatory standards for recovery residence facilities, while also allowing more stringent local regulation.

**Mental Illness and Substance Abuse:** **SUPPORT** recurring funding for mental illness and substance abuse support. **SUPPORT** sustainable matching state funds for counties that have received both planning and implementation Reinvestment Grant funds. **SUPPORT** diverting, medically assisting or treating mentally ill persons outside of the criminal justice system through alternative community programs.

**Behavioral Health System:** **SUPPORT** appropriate funding for core mental health and substance abuse services. **SUPPORT** continued efforts to work through Medicaid reform initiatives to ensure that persons with substance abuse and mental health treatment needs are appropriately served. **SUPPORT** efforts to increase supportive housing, employment and education initiatives for people with behavioral health issues and/or disabilities.

**Telemedicine:** **SUPPORT** increased use of telemedicine for mental and physical health. **SUPPORT** national licensure and/or certification of medical and behavioral health providers.

## HOMELESSNESS

**Dedicated Homeless Funding:** **SUPPORT** developing a dedicated state funding source for homeless programs and **SUPPORT** legislation that streamlines current state statutes relating to homelessness and associated programs, including the appropriations process. **SUPPORT** assistance for employers who hire individuals involved in specialty courts.

**Discharge Protocols:** **SUPPORT** the implementation of discharge protocols and/or procedures for hospitals, correctional facilities and mental health facilities when releasing homeless persons.

**Target Populations:** **SUPPORT** the development of strategies that would allow local governments to work with the state and federal government to serve target populations: the chronically homeless, veterans, and families and children, with particular emphasis on children aging out of the foster care system.

**Council on Homelessness:** **SUPPORT** continued coordination with the state's Council on Homelessness, specifically as it recommends policies and practices in support of the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness. **SUPPORT** efforts to extend tax credits to businesses that employ the homeless.

**Public Records Exemption:** **SUPPORT** creation of a public records exemption for individual identifying information entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Privatization of State Correctional Facilities:** **OPPOSE** privatization of the state's correctional facilities.

**Shift of Prison Inmates to Jails:** **OPPOSE** any efforts to shift inmates with less than a year on their sentence at the time of sentencing to jails instead of prisons.

**Small County Courthouse Funding:** **SUPPORT** continued state general revenue funding for capital improvements to county courthouses and other court-related facilities, including jails, located in rural counties.

**Inmate Medical Costs:** **SUPPORT** legislation that reduces jail expenses by setting a reimbursement amount paid by counties to medical providers for health care services for inmates and arrestees at no higher than the established Medicare rate plus 10%, the same rate as currently charged to the Department of Corrections, unless there is an existing contract in place or a business practice providing a lower rate.

**Human Trafficking:** **SUPPORT** legislation and programs designed to prevent trafficking, protect victims, prosecute traffickers and create partnerships across all levels of government, the private sector and state agencies to provide training opportunities for local government employees and their agents to recognize the signs of trafficking. This includes training for government inspectors, law enforcement, criminal justice, health care, transportation and public transit, educational partners and employees working with vulnerable populations.

**Firearm Preemption:** **SUPPORT** legislation empowering local law enforcement to prosecute individuals who dangerously discharge firearms.



**Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS): SUPPORT** state funding for research.

**Synthetic Drugs: SUPPORT** expanding the controlled substance schedule to include new iterations of synthetic formulas that mimic the effects of illegal drugs and prohibiting certain types of packaging and marketing of any products claiming to mimic the effects of illegal drugs.

**Residential Suppression Systems: SUPPORT** legislation that mandates the implementation of home fire sprinklers.

**Highway Safety: SUPPORT** legislation that protects vulnerable users of public roadways.

**Medicaid Eligibility: SUPPORT** continued efforts to obtain Medicaid eligibility for persons incarcerated in county jails while waiting disposition of their cases and to ensure that existing Medicaid benefits are not terminated during incarceration.

**Emergency Management: SUPPORT** legislation to create an exemption from public records requirements for info of a person staying in a public shelter.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE

**Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation: SUPPORT** initiatives that reduce juvenile detention through prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services and **SUPPORT** county diversion programs and juvenile civil citations.

**Juvenile Detention Facilities: SUPPORT** the legislature appropriating state funds to the Department of Juvenile Justice to upgrade, renovate or reconstruct detention centers across Florida that are in a state of disrepair and **SUPPORT** state investments in juvenile facilities to improve the conditions of secure confinement for detained youth, without such costs being shifted to the counties.

**Juvenile Direct File: SUPPORT** legislation that increases judicial oversight and authority for charging and sentencing juvenile defendants as adults without creating additional county service requirements.

