



**Federal Agenda
Lee County, Florida
2016**

PROJECT/ISSUE	IMPORTANCE TO LEE COUNTY	GOAL
FEMA & PUBLIC SAFETY		
National Flood Insurance Program	<p>As a low-lying area with a high risk of hurricanes, Lee County stands to be significantly impacted by changes to the NFIP.</p> <p>The congressionally mandated Affordability Study confirms that the NFIP does not currently have enough data to determine if flood insurance is affordable. Lee County should urge the NFIP to survey current policy holders to obtain accurate information to fill the data gaps.</p>	<p>Lee County is actively involved in influencing the NFIP reauthorization bill, which is supposed to be completed in September of 2017. Congress should reauthorize the NFIP on time with no interruption in service to policy holders regardless of the status of debate on NFIP reform or affordability.</p> <p>The County opposes FEMA’s proposed microsimulation modeling to estimate data for the congressionally mandated Affordability Study. This is another form of very expensive technical modeling that may drive up the cost of flood insurance and provide “guesstimates” rather than accurate information.</p> <p>Lee County supports FEMA providing local governments with budget/allocation info for all aspects of the NFIP. Without this information, we cannot effectively evaluate whether FEMA should reallocate money to flood protection projects that reduce flood risk rather than invest in flood-prediction modeling that drives up rates to pay for doomsday scenarios.</p>
Flood Insurance Affordability	<p>Flood insurance rates are increasing and becoming unaffordable for many Lee County residents and businesses.</p>	<p>Advocate for changes in NFIP reform that increase the affordability of flood insurance for property owners in Lee County.</p> <p>The County is seeking congressional programmatic language through the</p>

		FY17 Homeland Security Appropriations bill that asks Congress to consider a voucher program as a means to address affordability of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). It is critical that accurate data be used in determining eligibility and distribution of vouchers. In many communities, particularly coastal communities, there are often wide disparities between older homes and newer, sizeable homes regularly built near the water. The result is that a relatively small number of high-value homes exist alongside far more modest homes and businesses that have existed there for decades. The same is true with the disparity of household incomes. A micro-simulation model may average extremes and assign higher home values and incomes to NFIP policy holders in a geographic area, thus eliminating assistance for some who truly need the vouchers. For the forthcoming statutorily mandated affordability framework in which vouchers are being considered, FEMA should use their existing billing and survey process-- which allows for two mailings a year to each policy holder--to collect real data instead of simply relying on micro-simulation modeling.
FEMA Floodplain Funding Restrictions	President Obama's Executive Order 13690 modifies the federal flood risk management standard to improve flood resilience and reduce risk to federal investments. While not directed at local floodplain management practices, federal agency application of EO 13690 could have a significant fiscal impact on federal activities that are priorities for Lee County.	As federal agencies develop regulatory guidance required under EO 13690, work with the County and relevant federal agencies to minimize impacts on federal investments and priorities for Lee County.
Flood Protection and Mitigation funding	Lee County faces increasing vulnerability to flood risks.	Assist the County in addressing flood protection and mitigation by pursuing federal resources such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEMA Pre disaster Mitigation grants • FEMA Flood mitigation grants • FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) • FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) Program
Prioritize FEMA Disaster Preparedness & Mitigation Funds to	Hurricanes are among the most devastating natural events that localities face in Florida and the United States at-large. Because of the enormous public	The County is seeking congressional programmatic language in the FY17 Homeland Security appropriations bill that would direct FEMA to prioritize disaster preparedness and mitigation funding to high risk hurricane districts. Storm surge damage from a hurricane can quickly devastate vulnerable local

High Risk Hurricane Districts	safety and economic concerns that arise in the face of a potential hurricane making landfall in Lee County, a programmatic request directing FEMA to prioritize funding to areas designated by states as high risk hurricane districts would be beneficial to Lee County.	jurisdictions, which highlights the need for prioritization of funding. The majority of incidents declared as emergencies in the United States, according to FEMA, are issued for hurricanes, more than any other type of natural catastrophe or weather event. It is vital that the appropriate level of federal assistance is allocated on a priority basis to high risk hurricane districts, in order to save lives, protect property and public health and safety, and lessen the threat of hurricanes.
FEMA Flood Zone EMS Siting Restrictions	The County wants to build an EMS facility within the County, but is restricted due to federal funding restrictions on EMS facilities within flood zones.	Work with the County and FEMA to alleviate this problem for the County.
FEMA Flood Zone Red Cross Restrictions	Lee County is able to utilize the Red Cross for response to County emergencies in the flood plain but is prevented from doing so due to Red Cross flood plain management policies. As a result, the County must fund training for 140 volunteers for emergency situations.	Work with applicable agencies to find a solution that enables the County to utilize the Red Cross during emergencies.
P25 Digital Radio Communications System	Improvements are needed for the P25 hardware in shelter locations around the County and the P25 towers need to be upgraded.	Seek federal funding through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighter's Grant program to purchase P-25 hardware.

WATER RESOURCES

Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir Project	The C-43 Project will be the largest project in the CERP, once complete. This project has huge positive impacts for Lee County. The State of Florida has committed to funding this project in return for an equal amount of federal U.S. Corps of Engineers (USACE) funding to be spent on other CERP projects.	Ensure successful completion of a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) between the USACE and the State of Florida delineating the following commitment, announced by Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Jo-Ellen Darcy, to negotiate this C-43 PPA, between the State of Florida and the USACE in late November 2015. Under the PPA, the State of Florida would contract the C-43 Project completely from the outset and the USACE would pay the State back its 50% federal share of the C-43 Project to other CERP-related projects.
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Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)	<p>Lee County is directly impacted by multiple aspects of the WRDA bill. Congressional leaders want to pass a WRDA bill this year that could have a significant positive impact on such as the Herbert Hoover Dike, Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) and other projects benefitting the South Florida Ecosystem.</p>	<p>Support passage of a WRDA bill this year and ensure it includes HR 4467 and HR 4436 (see descriptions of the Herbert Hoover Dike Emergency funding bill and Everglades for the Next Generation Act bills below)</p>
Herbert Hoover Dike	<p>Rehab of the Herbert Hoover Dike is a priority to Lee County so that Lake Okeechobee operations can be modified to allow for additional storage in the Lake. The additional storage will provide the Corps the ability to lessen high-level discharges to the estuary and will also provide potential additional environmental releases during the dry season.</p>	<p>Currently the House and Senate Energy and Water appropriations bills both include \$49.5 million in funding. Support full funding for the Corps current implementation schedule on an annual basis.</p> <p>Support HR 4667 the Herbert Hoover Dike Emergency Funding Bill. Introduced by Congressman Clawson, this bill has the bipartisan backing of the Florida delegation including Rep. Patrick Murphy, Rep. Vern Buchanan (co-chair of the Florida congressional delegation), Rep. Alcee Hastings (co-chair of the Florida congressional delegation and the Everglades Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives,) Rep. Diaz-Balart and Rep. Bill Posey. The bill would set aside \$800 million and require the Corps to expedite repairs to the Herbert Hoover Dike by December 31, 2020.</p> <p>The bill's sponsors intend to seek inclusion of this language in the next WRDA bill.</p>
Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)	<p>The CEPP restoration project is designed to increase water flow south into the Everglades, thereby reducing harmful discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and improving the entire ecosystem for Lee County.</p>	<p>Support HR 4436 the Everglades for the Next Generation Act. The bill is the House companion to legislation that was introduced by Senator Bill Nelson (S. 2481) which authorizes the Central Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects and gives the Army Corps of Engineers the flexibility to continue necessary Everglades restoration progress and would authorize future restorations that will strengthen the South Florida ecosystem and environment, bolster the local economy, and create jobs. The bill is designed to automatically authorize any Everglades-restoration project the Army Corps of Engineers deems ready to begin in the next five years. One of the restoration projects that would be authorized immediately if this legislation passes is the Central Everglades Planning Project, or CEPP, which is designed to increase water flow south into the Everglades, thereby reducing harmful discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and improving the entire ecosystem. The bill has 6 sponsors: Clawson, Hastings, Diaz-Balart, Jolly, Frankel, and Murphy.</p>

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RESTORE Act	The RESTORE Act was signed into law on July 6, 2012 in response to the BP Oil Spill to mitigate damages from the spill. Lee County stands to benefit from the RESTORE Act in the amount of \$8,008,000 paid out over 15 years. Currently, Lee County cannot be reimbursed for eligible activities limiting the County to unreasonably small projects or having to wait to accumulate sufficient funding for larger projects.	Lee County supports a legislative fix that will allow the County to use the RESTORE Act funds to reimburse itself for larger projects as eligible under the Act.
Miserable Mile	The "Miserable Mile" of the Caloosahatchee River needs to be widened and dredged.	The West Coast Inland Navigation District confirms that the \$900,000 included in the Army Corps of Engineers Work Plan last year is sufficient to complete the project.
Matanzas Channel	The Matanzas Channel, which is maintained by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, needs dredging.	This project received \$3,000,000 in last year's Army Corps of Engineers Work Plan. The County is determining if more funding is needed to permanently complete the project.
Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS)	The County has numerous waterways, transportation projects, and water treatment projects which the County anticipates will be impacted - through increased costs and permitting delays-- by the new "Waters of the U.S." rule.	Support legislation to prevent the implementation of the WOTUS rule. *On 4/21 the Senate rejected an amendment to H.R. 2028, the Senate Energy and Water appropriations bill that would have blocked implementation of Waters of the U.S. rule.
TRANSPORTATION		
SR 82 (Immokalee Road) Widening, Colonial Boulevard to Hendry County line	Significant congestion and safety issues make this 2-lane undivided arterial roadway linking Fort Myers to Immokalee in critical need of widening.	Work with U.S. DOT and FDOT to obtain federal funding for County projects. FDOT has announced the advancement of the construction funding for 3 of the 4 SR 82 segments between Colonial Blvd. and the Hendry County line into their 5-year work program window; the one segment not included (in the middle) is because of a production constraint related to mucky soil.

Colonial Boulevard/I-75 Interchange Reconstruction	<p>Colonial Boulevard is a critical east-west arterial connecting the large platted communities of Cape Coral and Lehigh Acres to Fort Myers. The interchange and the portion of Colonial Boulevard between Six Mile Cypress Parkway and Forum Boulevard is highly congested throughout the day, and particularly bad during the morning rush hour, with traffic backing up on the interstate off-ramps and affecting the mainline flow, which is very dangerous and negatively impacting existing and pending commercial development around the I-75 interchange.</p>	<p>FDOT is currently working to revise plans to reconstruct the interchange area through the Interchange Modification Report (IMR) process. The new concept would be a Divergent Diamond Interchange configuration, which would also include a Continuous Flow Intersection layout for the Six Mile Cypress Parkway intersection. FDOT has no funds programmed or planned for the construction of these vital improvements. Develop a strategy to pursue funding for this project.</p> <p>The County is currently looking down the road (next year's grant cycle approx.. a year from now) at whether a FASTLANE project can be set up for the I-75/Colonial Boulevard project from a standpoint of determining timing, funding, and amount needed. FDOT is currently not considering this project construction ready for this cycle.</p>
Big Carlos Pass Bridge	<p>The PDE for this bridge project is already underway. The County is trying to get the state to contribute funds.</p>	<p>Work with U.S. DOT and FL DOT to obtain financial assistance. This is a \$45 million project of which the County has already spent \$20 million. It is a Lee MPO high priority.</p>
Fair Share Funding - Prioritize Transportation Funds to High Growth Areas	<p>There exists a limited amount of federal transportation funding for localities. As such, it is important for the U.S. Department of Transportation to prioritize funding to high growth communities that provide in excess of the requirements of federal matching formulas. A programmatic request outlining this issue could help ensure that Lee County receives its fair share of transportation dollars.</p>	<p>The County is seeking congressional programmatic language through the FY17 Transportation Appropriations bill to address high growth areas challenged by the high costs of infrastructure to support a growing economy. It is incumbent on local governments to grow the economy and help expand the nation's job base. To help do this, it is essential for the federal government to utilize federal dollars effectively in order to maximize the growth of local economies and the jobs that will follow as a result. To that end, distribution of federal funding for roadways should be allocated to local communities, based in part, on local matching funds raised and provided in excess of the requirements of federal matching formulas. Additionally, federal allocations should take into account the population growth of the local jurisdictions in question. Finally, the federal government should provide significantly more control over highway funding to local communities of all sizes.</p>
Transit / Veterans Administration Transit	<p>A thriving transit system is key to the livability of any growing community. Lee County Transit is comprised of a 60 bus fleet for fixed-route service, 42 door-to-door transit busses, and 11 vehicles in the van-share program. In the most recent year, there have been 3.7 million passenger trips on Lee County busses.</p>	<p>Monitor availability and eligibility for federal funding for: South County Transfer Facility</p>

INNOVATIVE FEDERAL FUNDING

<p>WIFIA Funding</p> <p>Water Utility and Natural Resource Projects</p>	<p>The County has numerous natural resources and water utility projects that could benefit from additional funding.</p>	<p>Pursue federal grants and/or financing for water, waste water, water reuse or natural resource projects. One new federal program the County can pursue is the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program. WIFIA provides low-interest federal loans for up to 49 percent of large drinking water, wastewater and water reuse projects. Prior to December 2015 tax exempt bonds were prohibited from financing the remaining 51 percent of a project. Now that the ban is repealed the County can seek WIFIA funding as a cost-effective option for broader range of utility and water resource projects.</p>
<p>TIFIA Funding</p> <p>Local and Regional Transportation Projects</p>	<p>The County has numerous transportation projects that could benefit from additional funding.</p>	<p>Pursue federal funding and/or financing for local and regional transportation projects. Explore the use of TIFIA financing. The FAST Act lowered the threshold for TIFIA projects to \$10 million, opening the door to a wider range of project types including complete streets, urban street retrofits, and other high priorities for local communities.</p>
<p>New Market Tax Credit Funding</p> <p>Economic Development Projects</p>	<p>The County has various economic development projects that could benefit from federal and private investment.</p>	<p>Develop strategy to address the County's economic development needs including the pursuit of federal funding. Explore the viability of New Market Tax Credit financing and EDA funding for economic development projects in census tracts eligible for programs.</p>
<p>RESTORE ACT funding</p>	<p>The County will eventually receive RESTORE Act funding, which it would like to use as a local match toward future County projects; however, it because it is unclear when these RESTORE Act funds will become available, the County is currently unable to utilize this future funding as the local match for current projects.</p>	<p>Seek legislative or administrative authority to leverage future RESTORE Act funding against current or near-term projects.</p>