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# **BAKER COUNTY**

## **LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

# **2026**



## 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### **CONTINUE FUNDING SMALL COUNTY ROAD PROGRAMS**

**Background:** The Small County Road Programs are critical to meeting Baker County's Transportation needs. The Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), Community Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) and the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) provide necessary transportation funding for road Improvements.

**Requested Action:** Continued support and increase monies generated by statewide gas tax collections to the State Transportation Trust Fund to provide essential transportation programs such as (SCRAP), (SCOP), (CIGP) and (TRIP). Prohibit the creation of any legislation that would restrict these types of funds due to comprehensive plan amendments adopted by small counties.

**Effect:** Continuation of these vital programs will enable counties to make much needed road improvements, create jobs, correct environmental problems created by runoff, and stimulate the local economy.

### **INCREASE MINIMUM S.H.I.P. ALLOCATION**

**Background:** Due to population, Baker County receives the minimum State allocation for the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) of \$350,000 annually. These funds are used to help Baker County citizens with much needed home repair or replacement. Due to the increased cost of construction in recent years Baker County has seen a decrease in the amount of services we can provide to our citizens. While historic level funding has been made by the State into the SHIP fund, minimum allocation increases to Counties have not been considered.

**Requested Action:** Increase the minimum allocation to Small/Rural Counties.

**Effect:** Increase number of residents who are assisted with much needed home repair/replacement.

### **FUNDING FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SHELTER**

**Background:** Baker County has utilized two local elementary schools as general population storm shelters and Ed Fraser Memorial Hospital as a special needs shelter for many years. With a population of 29,000 and growing, plus being a recipient County from Duval and other coastal communities, these arrangements are no longer sufficient. Baker County wishes to construct a new storm shelter that could house both general and special needs citizens in one location. This would also allow schools to resume normal activities much quicker after a disaster if they were not utilized as a shelter in the future. Funding assistance from the State would allow the construction of a facility that will meet local and regional needs.

**Requested Action:** Support funding for a newly constructed shelter.

**Effect:** Will provide shelter for evacuees, both general and special needs, for local and regional residents in the event of a major disaster.

### **APPROVE LEGISLATION FOR A LOCALLY IMPOSED SALES TAX**

**Background:** Ad valorem taxes have been insufficient and an inequitable source of revenue for small counties. Counties need to have the flexibility to levy additional sales tax at their discretion.

**Requested Action:** Allow counties the option to levy an additional sales tax.

**Effect:** The additional sales tax will create additional revenue for local governments that will affect the community as a whole and not limit the burden solely to property owners.



CITY OF  
**BUNNELL**  
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
**2026**



## City of Bunnell Northeast Florida Regional Legislative Priorities 2026

### ❖ **Restoration of the Historic Bunnell City Hall also known as the Bunnell Coquina City Hall:**

**Background:** Bunnell City Hall is in the heart of the oldest city in Flagler County. The Bunnell City Hall is a unique one-story public building constructed of locally quarried coquina stone. The building was constructed during the Depression Era of the 1930's under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a New Deal agency organized to alleviate unemployment. The building was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 2019. Some of the uses of this site are elections, board and other organizational meetings, cultural events, community outreach, summer programs for children and a place for private family events such as weddings, wedding receptions, graduations and baby showers. In 2021, the City had to close the building for use due to deteriorating conditions of the building and safety concerns regarding continued use. In 2022, remediation of the building was completed at costs exceeding \$100,000.00. Since 2023, the City has been seeking funding to complete all the required restoration that will not only meet the requirements of the National Registry of Historic Places but also create a facility that will better serve as a true community center that can easily be converted based on a wide variety of possible uses. The City has received two awards to assist with the restoration of the facility; however, current construction costs have limited the impact of the awards and the issues that could be addressed using the funding provided. The amount of structural needs in the building and other aspects of the building requiring work plus the requirements of historical preservation, require additional funding to restore the facility to a safe and full use.

**Requested Action:** Provide local levels of funding in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 to continue and finish the reconstruction of the National Registered Historic Bunnell City Hall also known as the Bunnell Coquina City Hall.

**Effect:** This funding will assist the City offset a large capital outlay needed to complete this project and reopen a facility vital to the community. This facility's central location and ease of access for citizens allow for the cultural, educational and enrichment of the citizens of Flagler County and adjacent counties as well. It also assists with maintaining the heritage of the community and connection to our past as the building is restored following the guidelines and restrictions required by Federal and State historical restoration requirements.

## ❖ **Road and transportation funding for Local Roads:**

**Background:** The City owns and maintains almost 27 miles of local roads. Some roads have remained unpaved since the City's incorporation in 1913. Aging roads and continued use of the existing paved roads have created road ratings which require more than just mill and pave work. Based on the current condition of the local roads, the mill and pave option is a short-term solution that will only be effective for a few months to a year before additional work is needed; this is not a fiscally responsible use of taxpayer monies. An estimated 25.5 miles of City owned roads require at least total depth reclamation work to be completed to restore them and some roads will require total reconstruction from sub-base, to base to total paving. With no new General Fund Revenues available due to a lack of growth or stalled growth, the City needs additional sources of funding to dedicate toward work on all local roads.

**Requested Action:** Provide local levels of funding in the amount of \$20,000,000.00 to assist with restoring an estimated 25.5 miles of local roads to a condition that will have a lifespan of several years which can then be extended with milling and paving.

**Effect:** This funding will improve the quality of life and safety for all City residents, business owners, visitors to the City and anyone who drives on City owned roads. Damaged local roads can contribute to an increase in road accidents, possible increased property damage and possible damage to other infrastructure such as utility lines including water, sewer, power, cable and internet as people veer and steer off-road to avoid damaged areas of roadway. Additional impacts range from assisting with driving times, reducing household vehicles, commercial vehicles, government fleet vehicles and emergency response vehicle repair costs brought on by possible damage caused by local road conditions which could include tires, shocks, struts, etc. and improvement in stormwater drainage. Improved roadways can also increase and encourage physical activity such as walking and cycling which promote mobility and safety.



# CLAY COUNTY

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

# 2026

# 2026

## CLAY COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Promote transition to a tax system that supports the County and provides resilience in changing economic times.

Continue to promote local control over tax dollars and the allocation of those funds.

Promote the consolidation of Public Service Answering Points (PSAPs) at the County level using a coordinating board for oversight.

Support increased funding for the judicial system and its supporting functions.

Address the rising costs of homeowner's insurance.

**HOME RULE CHAMPIONS**

See reverse side for legislative appropriation requests.



CITY OF  
**FERNANDINA  
BEACH**

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

**2026**



September 18, 2025

Elizabeth Payne  
Chief Executive Officer  
Northeast Florida Regional Council  
40 E. Adams Street, Suite 320  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

RE: City of Fernandina Beach Legislative Priorities for 2026

Dear Ms. Payne:

During their September 16, 2025, City Commission Regular Meeting, City Commissioners discussed Legislative policy and potential statutory concerns that may appear before the Florida Legislature in 2026. After some discussion of potential issues, City Commissioners completed individual ranking sheets which were then ranked. The City Commission then approved by vote the following outcomes:

1. Issues of priority concern that City and City designees including City Lobbyist will directly advocate against:
  - Bioethanol production in Fernandina Beach.
  - Proposals to eliminate property tax.
  - Limits on extraterritorial surcharges and enterprise fund transfers for municipal electric, water, wastewater and gas utilities.
  - More detrimental changes to the Live Local Act (so called affordable housing) with a communication strategy that includes the special concerns barrier islands have about increased population density.
  
2. Issues of concern the City will support League of Cities positions on:
  - Fix SB 180 (Emergencies) which passed in 2025, and which prohibits local governments from adopting more “burdensome or restrictive” comprehensive plan or land use policies.
  - Support preserving municipal authority over utility revenues and the ability to realize a reasonable rate of return on utility assets.
  - Support protecting municipal authority to set impact fees that safeguard existing taxpayers from incurring additional infrastructure costs.
  - Oppose the elimination of local business tax (formerly referred to in the City as Occupational License).



**City of Fernandina Beach**

**Ms. Sarah Campbell**

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City Manager

scampbell@fbfl.org

- Oppose large increases to Sovereign Immunity caps.
- Oppose dissolution of Regional Planning Councils.
- Oppose diminishment of Community Redevelopment Areas.

Thank you for including these priorities in the NEFRC regional priorities. We look forward to our continued partnership in the upcoming legislative session.

Yours very truly,

Sarah Campbell  
City Manager



# FLAGLER COUNTY

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

# 2026



**Policy Position on 2025 SB 180 – REQUEST MODIFICATIONS to SB 180 to Amend the Following:**

**Background:** The bill is intended to help hurricane victims, and it has many beneficial provisions in that regard, such as expedited permitting for homeowners rebuilding after a hurricane and requirements to post emergency information on county websites. However, the bill contains sweeping preemptions of local land development regulations, preemptions that are overbroad with no rationale nexus to the purpose of the bill. The law applies to every jurisdiction within 100 miles of the disaster declarations for Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton. By this formulation, the law applies to every city and county in the state without saying so. The law applies in Flagler County due to being within the disaster declaration for Hurricane Milton. SB 180 undermines the county’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and in particular the Community Rating System (CRS). Finally, SB 180 also prohibits local governments from adopting or enforcing an ordinance for substantial improvements or repairs and prohibits local governments from adopting or enforcing an ordinance for substantial improvements or repairs which includes a cumulative substantial improvement period.

**Requested Action:**

- Narrow the scope of the preemption of land use regulations, in both Sections 18 and 28, to properties with structures actually damaged by storms that cause federal disaster declarations.
- Shorten the duration of the preemption in Section 28 from October 2027 to October 2026.
- Eliminate Section 2, which prohibits the County from enforcing Floodplain Management Regulations imposing a 5-year lookback period for substantial improvements.

➤ **Protect and Increase Funding for the State of Florida Transportation Disadvantaged Program.**

**Background:** The Transportation Disadvantaged Program is a coordinated statewide effort, which groups riders together for a shared ride service. Transportation services are available in all 67 counties, including Flagler County, for those individuals that are eligible and have no access to transportation. The Florida Legislature created the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged in 1989 to set policies, provide direction to staff, administer, and implement all provisions of the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund per Chapter 427.013 F.S. The overall mission of the Commission is to ensure the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged people. The Commission is assigned to the Florida Department of Transportation for administrative

and fiscal accountability, but they function independently of the department. The Commission develops a budget that is submitted to the Governor by the Florida Department of Transportation. The Commission works with the local Governing body to assist in meeting its responsibilities for the transportation disadvantaged. Northeast Florida Regional Council as the planning agency appointed members to a Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board to oversee the transportation-disadvantaged program for Flagler County residents. The program in Flagler County provides mobility to older adults, people with disabilities, people with low incomes and at-risk children.

Flagler County as a small county with limited resources does not have a transportation system similar to VOTRAN or JTA, so its residents without a vehicle of their own are severely limited in their ability to get to a place of employment, doctor's visits, school, the library or to a local retail store. The program in Flagler County provides mobility to more than 3,000 older adults, people with disabilities, people with low incomes and at-risk children.

**Requested Action:** Urge the Florida Legislature to protect the Transportation Disadvantaged Program and request an increase in funding to support unmet trip requests.

**Effect:** Protecting and increasing the Transportation Disadvantaged Fund will not only continue the service but also allow more individuals without means of transportation to access much needed medical care, employment, food, education or other life sustaining needs. It contributes to the well-being of our residents and allows them to thrive in Flagler County.

➤ **Dedicate State Resources and Funding for the Development and Enhancement of Local Government Cybersecurity.**

**Background:** Local governments are routinely entrusted with gigabytes of personally identifiable, confidential and proprietary information about the businesses and citizens who live and operate within their jurisdictions. Several high-profile cyber-incidents in the public sector have highlighted the emerging challenges that cities face in protecting this data.

Local governments need help from the state in three primary areas: technical assistance, training and infrastructure improvements. Outside experts should be retained to conduct threat assessments to identify operational and system vulnerabilities so they can be addressed before they are exploited. Local governments should increase training for employees, emphasize the importance of being a cyber aware organization, and develop response plans in the event of a security breach. Finally, many cities and counties must devote resources to improving critical cyberinfrastructure to ensure that hardware and software are impenetrable.

**Requested Action:** Support legislation dedicating state resources for the development and enhancement of municipal cybersecurity by providing funding for technical assistance, threat assessments, employee training, infrastructure improvements and data protection, including the protection of exempt and confidential information such as law enforcement personnel information and security plans for government buildings and other key critical infrastructure.

**Effect:** Ensures the protection of County data and other critical infrastructure. Reduces risk of financial loss and of delays in emergency responses times and service delivery.

➤ **Increase Financial Support of the SCRAP and SCOP Grant Programs.**

**Background:** Currently, Flagler County receives millions of dollars each year of SCRAP & SCOP funding for projects. These funds make up the bulk of our entire capital improvement program. We use these funds to construct new roads, improve intersections, resurface and widen roadways and replace failing or aging stormwater structures. Many of the roadway projects that have been completed over the past several years provide some benefit to existing farming and agricultural operations in that we have been able to widen and resurface roadways that they utilize to move their crops/product to packing and from packing to market. There are existing packing house operations on CR 305, CR 304 and CR 2006.

**Requested Action:** Increase the amount of financial support to FDOT for the Small County Road Assistance and Outreach Programs.

**Effect:** Flagler County will be able to continue constructing new roads, improving existing roads and replacing any other infrastructure failure because of age or breakdown of the system. This infrastructure is an essential ingredient for economic development and growth in Flagler County.

➤ **Review and Adjust Population Parameters for Rural Designation as a Result of Florida's Rapid Growth.**

**Background:** Currently the Florida Statute 288.0656 (2) (e) defines a rural community as having a population as follows:

1. A county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
2. A county with a population of 125,000 or fewer which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.
4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural,

which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in paragraph (c) and verified by the department.

Since 1997 this part of the statute has only been modified twice. Once in 2001 when they went from a population of 50,000 to 75,000 for the county and then again in 2009. In 2009, the single modification was to the population of the contiguous county. The amount went from 100,000 to 125,000. Considering the significant population growth in the State of Florida over the last decade, the statute should be reviewed and modified to keep up with the growth specifically for the rural communities.

**Requested Action:** Urge the Legislature to review and modify Florida Statute 288.0656 (2) (e) to increase the population levels that define a rural community.

**Effect:** The modification will allow Flagler County and potentially other counties currently defined as rural to maintain that status and have access to the many resources and funding opportunities this program provides. Flagler County in particular will lose the ability to request a waiver on the match of future grant requests.

➤ **SUPPORT increased funding for local water infrastructure and Beach Nourishment projects.**

**Background:** Post Hurricanes Matthew, Irma and now Ian, saw large portions of Flagler County experience severe flooding. While flooding presents its own problems, these problems are compounded when septic tanks are old and failing, discharging nutrients at high levels in environmentally sensitive areas, beaches are eroding, and water and wastewater infrastructure is deteriorating. When these systems flood, as in recent weather events, unwanted environmental discharges increase.

Areas of Flagler County continue to rely on decades-old water and wastewater infrastructure. Coastal communities' potable water lines are subject to saltwater intrusion with corroding metal sewer system pipes and deteriorating lift stations which will pose a constant threat to the environment. The coastal area is a major part of the water that drains towards the Matanzas inlet. This drainage, when coupled with the continued bacterial and untreated storm water pollution and freshwater discharges, impacts and threatens the remaining Class II shell fishing waters in both Flagler and St. Johns counties.

**Requested Action:** Urge the Legislature to increase available funding through the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

**Effect:** Flagler County along with the local municipalities can begin to eliminate septic tank pollution, improve water quality, renourish the beach and add a layer of storm hardening for residents in the area for future events.



CITY OF  
**GREEN COVE  
SPRINGS**  
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
**2026**

## Talking Points: Local Decision-Making & Home Rule



### What is local decision-making?

- Local decision-making, also called *Home Rule*, gives cities the authority to pass laws that meet their community's unique needs.
- It has been part of the Florida Constitution for more than 50 years.
- Cities may act as long as their laws don't conflict with state or federal law.

### Why it matters:

- Local government can respond quickly to community needs, such as adding stoplights, traffic signs, building stormwater ponds, or hosting parades, without waiting on state approval.
- City leaders are closest to the people and best equipped to understand and address local priorities as communities grow and change.

### The challenge:

- In the past two decades, Tallahassee has seen an increase in "one-size-fits-all" legislation, often pushed by corporate special interests.
- These laws assume every city has the same needs, despite major differences between places like Miami, St. Augustine, Key West, and Pensacola.
- This limits the ability of cities to solve problems in ways that best serve their residents.

### How to get involved:

- Advocate for protecting local decision-making and self-government.
- Ask legislators to focus on statewide issues and let locally elected officials handle local issues.

## Legislative Talking Points: Property Taxes



### The Florida Formula – Keep Dollars and Decisions Local

- Florida has one of the nation’s most efficient tax systems, built to keep taxes low, services strong, and decisions accountable at the local level. Our community continues to work hard to keep property taxes low, even as inflation, insurance, and material costs rise.
- Property tax dollars stay in our unique community, funding essential services like police, roads, reliable electric, parks, and clean water.
- Moving these dollars and decisions to Tallahassee puts control in the hands of distant lawmakers who don’t know our community’s needs.

### Protecting Homeowners – *Save Our Homes*

- The *Save Our Homes* constitutional amendment caps homesteaded property tax increases at 3% a year, no matter how much values rise.
- This is the single biggest tax protection most Florida families have, growing more valuable the longer you live here.
- Eliminating this system is not a tax cut, it’s a tax shift that would raise costs for full-time Florida residents through higher sales taxes, new fees, or reduced services.

### The Real Affordability Crisis – Insurance, Not Property Taxes

- Florida families are being squeezed by skyrocketing homeowner’s insurance premiums, which have doubled in just three years.
- Property tax “reform” proposals are a distraction from this real crisis.
- Lawmakers should focus on fixing insurance, not dismantling a property tax system that already works.

### Risks of State Interference

- Centralized, one-size-fits-all policies ignore the unique needs of communities.
- Cutting or capping local revenue could force painful choices such as fewer police officers, deteriorating roads and infrastructure, or higher local fees.
- Public safety is the largest part of our city budget and is funded largely by property taxes.

### Our Ask to Lawmakers

- Protect local decision-making and local governments. Let communities govern themselves and keep property tax dollars local.
- Preserve homeowner protection. Keep *Save Our Homes* intact.
- Tackle the real issue. Focus on insurance reform, not property tax “reform.”



## Talking Points on Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs)

### What are Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs)?

- CRAs are locally funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) meaning no new taxes, no state dollars.
- The dollars stay in the community, reinvesting growth in property values back into the same area.
- CRAs have strengthened accountability since 2019 with mandatory reporting, ethics training, and spending restrictions.

### How CRAs Differ from General City Spending

- Redevelopment doesn't compete with police, fire, and core services. Spending tied to the plan and tracked in annual reports.
- Spending must follow a publicly adopted redevelopment plan.
- Property owners see visible reinvestment in their own neighborhoods.

### Key Benefits of CRAs

- Housing: CRAs leverage private investment to build and rehab affordable and workforce units, no state funding needed.
- Small Businesses: Provide grants for improvements, safety, and streetscapes.
- Local Economy: CRAs anchor businesses, create jobs, and revitalize neighborhoods.
- Eliminating CRAs would worsen the housing shortage and remove one of the few tools cities have to support small businesses under rising costs.

### Path Forward

- Oppose CRA sunset in 2045 – long-term certainty attracts investment.
- Oppose prohibiting new projects after October 1, 2025 – businesses depend on CRA commitments.
- Build on 2019 reforms: strengthen oversight while keeping CRAs effective for housing, infrastructure, and small business growth. CRAs align with state priorities without raising taxes or growing government.

### Key Messages

- CRAs strengthen local economies, expand affordable housing, and support small businesses.
- They are fiscally responsible tools for redevelopment.
- Eliminating CRAs would force cities to rely on higher taxes or state funding. Preserving them is the smarter path.



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# **NASSAU COUNTY**

## **LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

# **2026**



**NASSAU COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
96135 Nassau Place, Suite 1  
Yulee, Florida 32097

John F. Martin  
A.M. "Hupp" Huppmann  
Jeff Gray  
Alyson McCullough  
Klynt A. Farmer

Dist. No. 1 Fernandina Beach  
Dist. No. 2 Amelia Island/Fernandina Beach  
Dist. No. 3 Yulee  
Dist. No. 4 Bryceville/Hilliard  
Dist. No. 5 Callahan/West Yulee

TACO E. POPE, AICP  
County Manager

DENISE C. MAY, ESQ.  
County Attorney

## **MEMORANDUM**

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**DATE:** September 17, 2025

**TO:** Hon. A.M. "Hupp" Huppmann, Chairman

**FROM:** Taco E. Pope, AICP, ICMA-CM, County Manager

**CC:** Nassau County Board of County Commissioners  
Denise C. May, Esq., County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) 2026 Legislative Priorities

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Annually, the NEFRC requests input from each of the Counties and Municipalities within the region to create and move forward legislative priorities for the Northeast Florida Region.

The NEFRC legislative priorities are intended to address regional scale issues. After reviewing the priorities of each County and Municipality in the region, the NEFRC Legislative Committee will determine the top "regional priorities" that represent the most critical concerns of the Northeast Florida Region. Once finalized, the Council's Legislative Priorities will be distributed to the NEFRC Board of Directors and member local governments. Additionally, the Priorities will be provided to the Regional Legislative Delegation for their consideration and action.

After speaking with you individually and conferring with our County Departments, the priorities provided below were compiled for the Board of County Commissioners'(BOCC) consideration. The priorities provided to the NEFRC from the BOCC are 100% at the discretion of the BOCC. The information provided is meant to facilitate conversation.

The topic areas are:

1. Property Tax Reform
2. Florida 2026 Senate Bill 180
3. Home Rule
4. Flood Mitigation/Resilience
5. Small, Rural and Transitioning Counties Infrastructure Program Support
6. Live Local Act/Affordable Housing
7. Conservation Land Acquisition Funding
8. Maintain Regional Councils

## **Ad Valorem Property Tax Reform**

**Background:** During the previous State Legislative session, members of the State Legislature and the Governor's Office advocated for state property tax reform. The discussions included a range of ideas from an outright abolishment of property taxes to a variable partial elimination of property taxes for properties with Homestead Exemption based on variations in home value and owner's age.

Accompanying the call for property tax reform was a push for legislation prohibiting the placement of a lean on Homesteaded property for failure to pay property taxes. As conceptualized, this prohibition would apply to leans associated with alternative revenue generation mechanisms such as service Municipal Services Benefit Units (MSBU), Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU), assessments (e.g. Fire Assessment, Stormwater Assessment, Shore Stabilization districts, etc.) and similar.

Reports from Capital Hill coupled with conversations with State Officials indicate that no viable alternative revenue source(s) has been identified to support local governments that is(are) stable, predictable, and enforceable. In one recent instance, when pressed to articulate the alternative revenue plans the state legislature has in mind, a State Official asked that local government staff submit ideas to State Officials on how Nassau County can generate new revenues to replace those generated by property taxes.

Nassau County has reduced its millage rate for five consecutive years while also improving levels of service, increasing credit rating, and investing in critical infrastructure and quality-of-life improvements. For Nassau County, an estimated 46% of annual ad valorem revenues are collected from properties with Homestead Exemption. A 46% reduction in revenue will directly correlate to a 46% reduction in services to County residents, without any offsetting revenues that are stable, predictable and enforceable. For reference, the primary services funded by ad valorem taxes are Sheriff (38.7%), Fire (24.4%), Transportation (12.4%), and Constitutional Offices (10.9%).

No matter which option is ultimately selected, without offsetting revenues, there will be substantial reductions in public safety and county operations at all levels.

**Requested action:** (1) Respect Home Rule. (2) The State directly and fully fund all Constitutional Offices. (3) The State take responsibility for all unfunded mandates for counties to provide operations and facilities support for Courts, UF Extension, Health Department, State Attorney, Public Defender, etc. (4) The State directly and fully fund fire rescue services since the legislature is advocating for a 24/72 work schedule at great expense to local government. (5) Allow Counties to utilize all the revenue generating options

that the state and municipalities enjoy. (6) Work with counties and municipalities to provide new or alternative revenue sources.

**Effect:** Property tax reform that fails to include a stable, predictable and enforceable alternative revenue source to fund local government operations will result in an adverse impact on public health, safety, and general welfare. For Nassau County, it will result in dramatic reduction in funding for the Nassau County Sheriff's Office, Nassau County Fire Rescue, Constitutional Offices, and investment in transportation systems.

### **Florida 2026 Senate Bill 180**

**Background:** Article VIII, Section 1(f) of the Florida Constitution provides that counties "shall have such power of self-government as is provided by general or special law," and authorizes counties to "enact ... county ordinances not inconsistent with general or special law." Pursuant to Section 1(f) of Article VIII of the Florida Constitution and Chapters 163 and 125, Florida Statutes, counties have broad authority to adopt comprehensive plans, enact land development regulations, issue development permits, and impose temporary moratoria in furtherance of local public health, safety, and welfare, including for purposes of orderly growth, environmental protection, disaster recovery, and community resiliency.

On June 26, 2025, Senate Bill 180 ("SB 180"), titled "Emergencies," was signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis and became effective immediately as Chapter 2025-190, Florida Statutes. Among other things, Section 28 of SB 180 prohibits all local government-initiated ordinances that impose "more restrictive or burdensome" comprehensive plan amendments, land development regulations, or procedures concerning review, approval, or issuance of site plans, development permits, or development orders (collectively, "Land Use and Zoning Regulations") for the period commencing retroactively from August 1, 2024, through October 1, 2027, even if such amendments, regulations or procedures are in no way related to any hurricane or other emergency and even if such amendments, regulations, or procedures were duly enacted prior to the enactment of SB 180. Section 28 of SB 180 also bans local moratoria on construction, reconstruction, or redevelopment of property damaged by a hurricane during the same timeframe; and Section 18 of SB 180 further prohibits local governments located in counties that are entirely or partially within 100 miles of the track of any future hurricane from enacting "more restrictive or burdensome" Land Use and Zoning Regulations, and moratoria on construction, reconstruction, or redevelopment of any property, damaged or not, for a period of one year after the storm makes landfall.

SB 180 constitutes a sweeping intrusion on home rule authority, threatening local ability to enact land use, zoning, flood resiliency, and environmental protections, contrary to Article VIII, Section 1(f) of the Florida Constitution to a degree that renders the constitutional provision hollow. SB 180's vague prohibitions on moratoria on construction, reconstruction,

and redevelopment of properties and Land Use and Zoning Regulations that are “more restrictive or burdensome,” and other ambiguous provisions render SB 180 incomprehensible, create uncertainty, chill local governance, and encourage preemptive, and potentially frivolous litigation to force local governments into repealing legislation, even if it might otherwise be a valid exercise of home rule authority.

**Requested action:** Amend SB 180 (Chapter 2025-190, Florida Statutes) to remove portions which erode Home Rule particularly as it relates to land development regulations, zoning, and comprehensive planning. Provide an exemption for counties who were not directly impacted by hurricanes.

**Effect:** SB 180 removed local government’s ability to provide Land Use and Zoning Regulations afforded under Home Rule. The requested amendment reinstates these controls for local land development regulations, zoning, and comprehensive planning.

## **Home Rule**

**Background:** Home rule is an important and vital component of city and county government. It keeps state government from interfering in matters that should be regulated by local jurisdictions; that is the elected officials closest to their constituents. Recent actions by the state legislature have impaired local jurisdiction's ability to protect job creating land use from residential development, generate needed funding for infrastructure, eliminated the ability to adjust land development regulations to meet local needs that are deemed “more restrictive or burdensome”, and placed unexpected financial strain on local ad valorem tax dollars.

**Requested Action:** While we acknowledge there are certain items that are of State interest that warrant preemption of local authority, we respectfully request the Legislature to more fully assess the impacts of enacting legislation that limits local jurisdictional control over urban planning and design, land-use policy, protection of job creating land uses from residential development, impact fees, short-term/vacation rental, revenue generation, and other related matters as these issues are not universal in nature and are subject to the context of place - each jurisdiction is different.

**Effect:** Allowing local jurisdictions to apply regulations crafted in the unique context of each locality allows jurisdictions to leverage their uniqueness of place and capitalize on opportunities while at the same time creating more livable communities for our citizens.

## **Flood Mitigation/Resiliency**

**Background:** Nassau County consists of 253.7 miles of streams and 35% of its jurisdiction is affected by high-risk flood zones A, AE, and VE. The Nassau County Master Storm Water Plan (April 2012) provided an engineering analysis of the existing storm water management system and identified problematic riverine areas which have indeed been impacted by subsequent storms. County code requires new and major improvements to be built to standards which reasonably protect from flood hazard and recent entry in the NFIP/CRS program has incentivized the community to protect property, persons, and natural floodplain functions from risk and hazard in flood prone areas, many of which are sensitive environmental sites. Older residences in Volume Sensitive Areas and problematic areas are acutely at risk for flood damage and personal danger. Although FEMA offers assistance to mitigate flood risk for these types of property, the national demand for flood mitigation has increased the competitiveness of these grants. To provide just one local example, Nassau County completed a Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Grant through USACE executing a study of the Thomas Creek Watershed. The Thomas Creek Watershed includes numerous repetitive loss properties and routinely suffers property damage during named and unnamed storm events.

**Requested action:** Continue to prioritize funding and proactively assist local governments in their efforts to mitigate the impacts of flooding/sea level rise and create more resilient communities. This may come in the form of match assistance for grants received through the USACE and/or FEMA, funding for physical improvements such as living shore installations and erection of sea walls, funds to purchase and remove repetitive loss properties, or funds to raise repetitive loss structures above the base flood elevation. Local implications include implementation of the recommendations from the USACE to mitigate flooding and reduce repetitive loss of property within the Thomas Creek Watershed. All these options are outlined in the Board Approved Thomas Creek Implementation Plan. Support appropriations to assist local government for property acquisition, building elevation and relocation of buildings in areas of high risk, thus reducing risk to persons and property, and to allow for conversion of those areas to open space or conservation areas.

**Effect:** Funds for flood mitigation and proactive actions that promote resiliency will help local communities to retrofit or remove properties from high-risk areas thereby reducing the risk to persons and property. Removal of people and properties from high-risk areas can allow for the conversion of said areas to open space or conservation which can provide recreation and can positively impact water quality, reduce future flooding potential, and create more sustainable and resilient communities that, over time, require less monetary investment to maintain and protect.

## **Small, Rural and Transitioning Counties Infrastructure Program Support**

**Background:** Like many counties in Florida, Nassau is a rapidly transitioning coastal county that is in a hyper-growth situation. The rapid expansion of the population and correlating urbanization of rural lands has placed a significant strain on existing infrastructure and the need for investment in new infrastructure. In addition to traditional infrastructure demands, the global pandemic shined a light on the critical nature of universal access to broadband/highspeed internet. There is broad consensus that we, as a collective society, view broadband/high-speed internet as essential infrastructure and bridge the 'digital divide'. Across Florida the demand generated by growth exceeds the ability of most local jurisdictions to unilaterally keep pace with infrastructure needs. Nassau, like most transitioning communities, is dependent on State and Federal support to accommodate growth in a responsible manner.

**Requested Action:** Respectfully request the Legislature to enhance funding for small county transportation infrastructure programs such as SCOP and SCRAP. These programs, and other similar programs, provide vital revenue for small counties to deliver critical transportation projects and keep pace with growth.

Additionally, it is respectfully requested of the Legislature to continue to provide grant funding in both the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Commerce. Such funding will aid in the construction and expansion of centralized water and sewer to (1) eliminate septic systems and individual wells and (2) promote economic development in rural and transitioning communities. It is requested that programs be designed to allow small, rural and/or transitioning counties to have an equitable opportunity to secure funding.

To aid in accessibility of broadband/highspeed internet, it is respectfully requested of the Legislature to continue to pursue programs that make universal broadband realistic and assist local government in executing installation.

**Effect:** The allocation of additional funds and creation of more robust programs aimed at assisting small, rural and/or transitioning counties in the execution of infrastructure projects will result in more resilient, sustainable, and livable communities for the citizens and businesses of Florida. Continued allocation of funding to expand water and sewer will provide for the elimination of individual well and septic systems in environmentally sensitive areas and will have the direct positive effect of reducing environmental impacts to environmentally sensitive areas. Additionally, grant funding for system expansions and fast track permitting of water and sewer system expansion will also allow enhanced economic development in rural and transitioning communities. Having the ability to quickly get water and sewer to sites already approved for industrial development will increase Florida's economic competitiveness in attracting industry.

Likewise, as acknowledged by the NEFRC and made a part of previous Regional Legislative Priorities, it has been recognized that broadband has evolved to be essential infrastructure in the current age as internet connectivity has become necessary to access job opportunities, educational content, healthcare options, government benefits and numerous other services. Therefore, Nassau County supports all efforts by the State of Florida and the Department of Commerce for the provision of reliable and affordable high-speed internet access to every household and business throughout the State of Florida. These actions not only make Florida more competitive on the global scale for economic expansion and high wage jobs, but it also creates more equitable, resilient, and livable communities for the citizens of Florida.

### **Live Local Act/Affordable Housing**

**Background:** Housing affordability is a challenge across the US. In Florida, the challenge is magnified by rapid in-migration from other states. The latest population estimates from the US Census Bureau reveal that Nassau’s population expanded by 12.34% from 2020 to 2023. This extraordinary growth rate ranks Nassau as the 46th fastest growing County out of 3,145 counties in the United States. From 2016-2023, the median single-family home price has increased from \$237,000 to \$450,000. This challenge is not unique to Nassau County or the Northeast Florida Region; housing affordability is a State-wide challenge. As such, the challenge of home affordability cannot be solved by local government alone nor can it be solved by local preemptions that inhibit the ability of local government to protect job creating land uses and set affordability standards suited to the local market.

**Requested Action:** Amend or repeal portions of the Live Local Act. Specifically:

- (1) Reduce the affordability standard from 120% to 80% AMI.
  - a. In the alternative, allow counties to undertake a county-specific housing affordability assessment to base the affordability standard on county-specific data.
- (2) In-lieu-of mandating that local governments permit residential uses on lands with an Industrial Future Land Use Map designation and/or industrial zoning classification, grant local government the ability to make permissible, at the local government’s discretion, the construction of residential uses on industrial lands.
  - a. In the alternative, allow local governments, at their discretion, the ability to prohibit residential use in the below targeted industrial areas:
    - i. planned industrial parks;
    - ii. working waterfronts;
    - iii. job centers/industrial areas where the local government has funded or planned for infrastructure for the purpose of creating jobs, e.g. installation of public water;

- iv. job centers/industrial areas where the local government has accepted a grant with job creation criteria, e.g. State of Florida Job Growth Grant; and
- v. lands accessible by rail or adjacent to current or planned highway interchanges.

**Effect:** (1) Protect job creating industrial lands that are critical to Florida’s future economy, (2) maintain LLA mandates to make permissible affordable housing on commercial and mixed-use lands, and (3) set an affordability rental rate standard that is affordable to the workforce based on the local market conditions, (4) allow local governments to meet the job creation requirements of previously awarded grants.

### **Conservation Land Acquisition Funding**

**Background:** Florida’s population and non-residential sectors have enjoyed robust growth over the previous decade. Between now and 2030, Florida’s population is predicted to expand by another 1.4 million people. Along with the population expansion will be the urbanization of greenfield sites across the state to support jobs, service and retail opportunities, schools, roads and other civil infrastructure necessary to support the population expansion. To balance rapid urbanization with the preservation of Florida’s amazing natural features and working lands it is critical that strategic land acquisitions [fee and less than fee] for conservation take place.

**Requested action:** Increase state funding for land acquisition and conservation easements.

**Effect:** Expanded funding will protect Florida’s natural environments, safeguard ecological corridors, and preserve critical habitats. These investments not only ensure the protection of Florida’s biodiversity and environmental health for future generations, but also reinforce the state’s reputation as a destination for tourism, investment, and high quality of life. By preserving natural resources now, Florida can continue to thrive economically while maintaining its environmental heritage.

### **Maintain Regional Councils**

**Background:** Regional planning councils are a vital resource for local governments to plan for growth that is environmentally and fiscally sustainable. They do not receive direct state funding, so eliminating them would not help balance the state budget. The councils provide planning support for important issues such as transportation, emergency preparedness and economic development, as well as comprehensive plan assistance for small governments that don’t require full-time planning staff. They also help local governments identify and

secure grant funding. Moving to do away with them is surprising and ill-advised given the Legislature's commitment to supporting rural communities this session.

**Requested action:** These councils provide data, analysis, and planning support for important issues such as transportation, emergency preparedness and economic development.

**Effect:** Particularly in rural areas, RPCs assist with preparing and updating comprehensive plans for their member governments. Moving to do away with them is surprising and ill-advised given the legislature's commitment to supporting rural communities this session. RPCs do not receive direct state funding, so eliminating them would not help balance the budget.



CITY OF  
**PALM  
COAST**  
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
**2026**



2026  
Legislative Session  
Local Priorities

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## Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) – Regional Priority

### **Background:**

Northeast Florida has experienced rapid population growth, resulting in increased demands on critical utility infrastructure. Water and wastewater are essential for public health, environmental protection, and economic development, yet the costs to expand and upgrade these systems have outpaced local revenue growth. Without additional funding, municipalities across our region struggle to keep up with the infrastructure demands tied to population growth, extreme weather events, and rising construction costs.

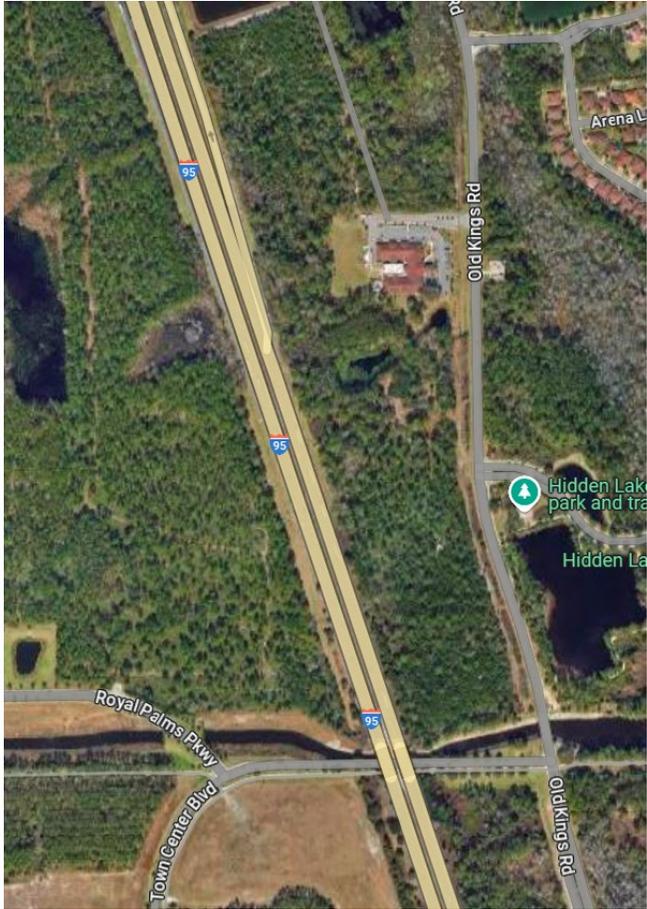
### **Priority:**

The City of Palm Coast, in partnership with the Northeast Florida Regional Council, advocates for increased state assistance for utility infrastructure funding. We urge the Florida Legislature to expand grant opportunities and matching fund programs specifically aimed at supporting utility infrastructure in high-growth regions.

# F.S. 23 / Burroughs Drive Stormwater Park



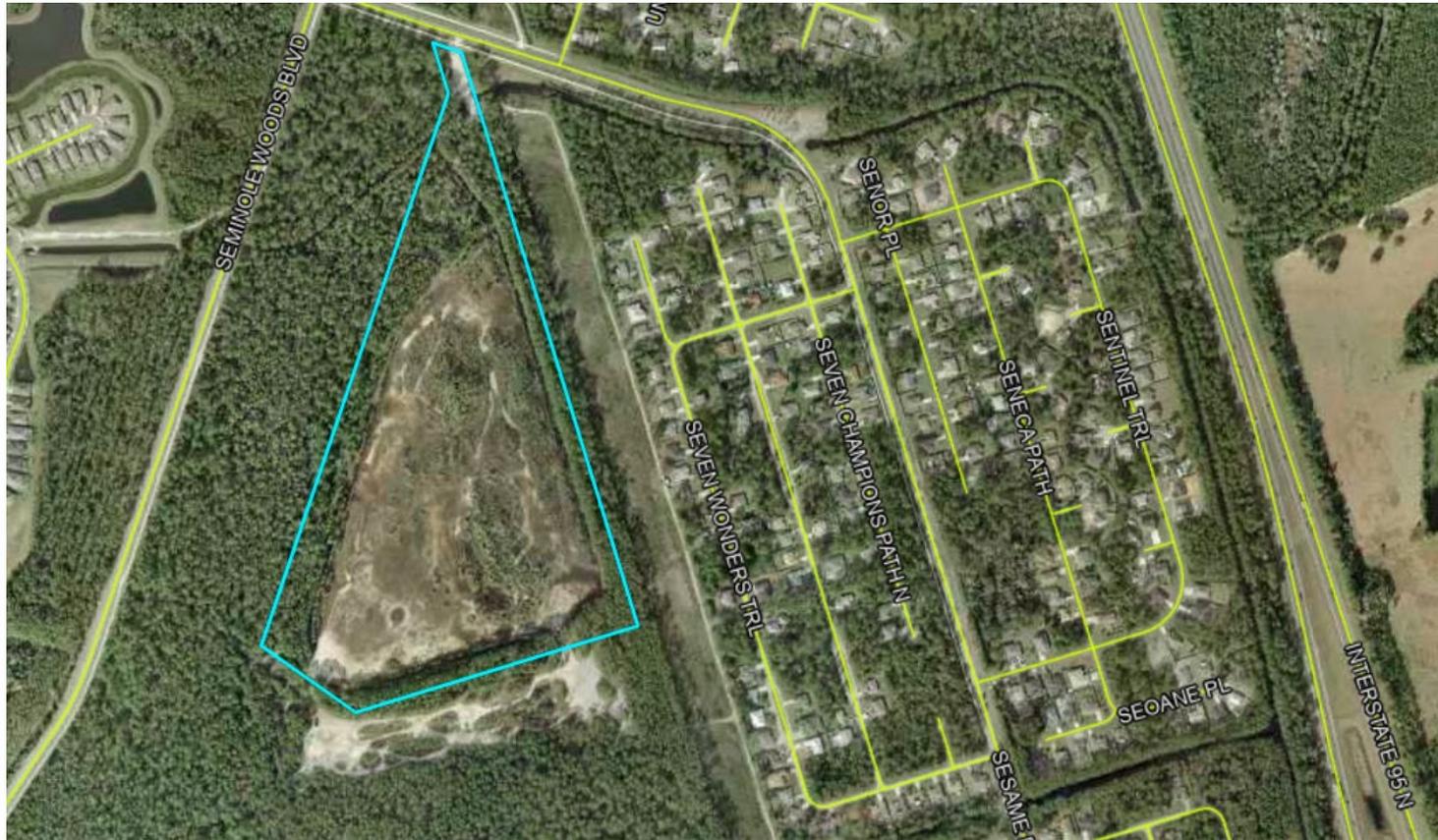
## I-95 Parallel Facility – Old Kings Road phase 2A



# Woodlands Subdivision Stormwater Capacity project



## Seminole Woods Dry Lake and Weir Project



# Partnership with Flagler County Construction of New Animal Shelter



## Construction of a New County Animal Shelter.

### Background

The Flagler Humane Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the welfare of animals. The Humane Society was originally founded in and built on land donated by ITT. Eventually agreements and funding to provide animal control and care services was established with Flagler Beach, Bunnell and Unincorporated Flagler County. Since the City of Palm Coast provides its own animal control services, they only allocate funds for sheltering services.

Recently, many residents have voiced concerns about the overcrowding issues because of the increase in strays and animals that are surrendered. While Flagler County population has grown in double digits since the shelter opened the ability to increase space to house these animals has diminished over the years.

Through creating a new partnership and pooling of funds that are currently being provided by the county and municipalities, we could build and support a new animal shelter with full services.



## Saltwater Canal Dredging



## Old Kings Road Construction Phase III



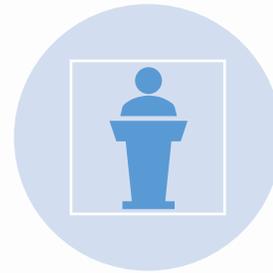
## Next Steps and Schedule



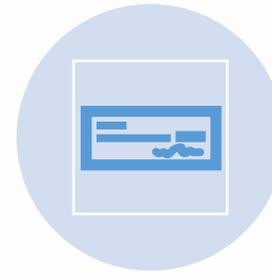
**APPROVE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
RESOLUTION**



**SCHEDULE MEETINGS WITH  
LEGISLATORS BEFORE SESSION**  
**INITIATED BY THE SOUTHERN GROUP**



**PRESENT AT LEGISLATIVE  
DELEGATION MEETING**



**SUBMIT HOUSE  
APPROPRIATION BILLS**





CITY OF  
**ST. AUGUSTINE  
BEACH**  
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
**2026**

## **St. Augustine Beach's 2026 legislative priorities.**

- 1. Continue financial allocations by the state for beach restoration projects.**
- 2. Provide state financial support for barrier island cities to develop resiliency projects.**
- 3. Legislative action either to allow cities to directly collect tourist development tax dollars to pay for services related to tourism, or to require counties to provide a percentage of tourist development tax dollars to cities to fund law enforcement services and infrastructure projects that benefit tourists.**
- 4. Develop alternative modes of transportation to connect St. Johns and surrounding counties.**
- 5. Provide legislation to develop a regional plan for affordable housing.**
- 6. Adopt legislation that will protect and strengthen the authority of cities and counties.**



# ST. JOHNS COUNTY

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

# 2026



## St. Johns County Regional Priorities for NEFRC Advocacy

### Florida Museum of Black History

- **Request the Legislature pass governance legislation** for the Florida Museum of Black History, to include the establishment of a board of directors to oversee the commission, construction, operation, and administration of the museum.

**1. Fully implements the \$1million initial commitment** by the Governor and the Legislature to build a nationally significant museum in NE Florida.

**2. Governance Legislation is a Priority of Future Leadership**

- Bill filed by future Senate President Tom Leek
- Support from Speaker Designate Sam Garrison

**3. Overwhelming Support from NEFRC Member Counties and Local Officials**

Clay County BOCC	Jacksonville Mayor & City Council
Clay County School District	Nassau County BOCC
Duval County Public Schools	Nassau County School District
Flagler County BOCC	St. Johns County BOCC
Flagler County School District	St. Johns County School District

### Water First North Florida Project

- **Request the Legislature provide phased funding** for this aquifer recharge project with regional and statewide significance. The project will also:

- restore flows to protect the region's rivers and springs;
- ensure a sustainable water supply for the region's current and future needs;
- support agriculture, small business, tourism and economic development; and
- restoring wetlands that support wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

**1. State and Local Partnership Project**

This cooperative project is a coordinated effort by the Department of Environmental Protection, the St. Johns River Water Management Project, Suwannee River Water Management District, and 14 regional counties, **including all NEFRC members**.

**2. Affordability**

Maintains the future water supply without burdening the taxpayer with costly alternatives, such as desalinization.