



Charlotte County

Board of County Commissioners



2019
State Legislative
Program

2019 State Legislative Agenda

Guiding Statement

State and Local Governments are partners in the promotion and protection of the health and welfare of the community. To preserve this partnership Charlotte County will:

- Support state policies which benefit the economic development, environmental and social health of Charlotte County and its citizens.
- Oppose legislative changes or fiscal decisions which impact County revenues such as unfunded mandates, revenue limitations, trust fund diversions or cost shifts.
- Support local flexibility to address problems by honoring home rule and avoiding unnecessary preemptions of local authority.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Ken Doherty,
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District 1



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District 4



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District 5



Charlotte County works in partnership with Florida's 67 counties via the Florida Association of Counties (FAC). Policy statements adopted by the FAC membership for the 2019 Florida Legislative Session will be incorporated throughout Charlotte County's State Legislative Agenda.

2019 State Legislative Agenda

Policy Statements

Economic Development

- **Support** funding for an Airframe & Powerplant Mechanic Program in Charlotte County that will support the rapidly growing aviation industry in Southwest Florida and the entire state.
- **Support** state funding that allows for creative approaches for local government partnerships with K-12, technical and post-secondary educational institutions in the creation of job training programs and innovation clusters that increases economic development opportunities.
- **Support** funding for the Smart Horizons Online High School program which was designed to reengage adults into the education system and prepare them for entry into post-secondary career education and/or the workforces.
- **Support** continued funding of the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund that provides critical funding for necessary infrastructure and workforce development projects that support economic development in Florida.
- **Support** legislation and appropriation that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the state and local government partnership in economic development through the greater use of targeted strategies and strategic investments to induce and retain sustainable economic activity resulting in a consistent positive return on investment for both state and local governments.
- **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 the State of Florida that promotes and is tied to infrastructure and workforce education in science, technology, engineering, arts and math.
- **Support** efforts to maintain or increase funding for local government affordable housing programs.
- **Oppose** effort to sweep the Local Government Housing Trust Fund and the State Housing Trust Fund that provides needed funding for affordable and workforce housing.
- **Oppose** efforts that seek to sunset or eliminate existing Community Redevelopment Agencies.

Budget, Taxation & General Government

- **Support** the repeal of a 1981 special act for Charlotte County that provided authorization for compensation of a monthly stipend for travel expenses for Commissioners. This provision in statute is obsolete and inconsistent with current county practices and IRS rules.
- **Support** repeal of a 1963 special act for Charlotte County that authorized the Board of County Commissioners to expend funds for the entertainment, travel expenses and lodging of visiting dignitaries or public officials. This provision in statute is obsolete and inconsistent with current county policies which prohibit the use of general revenues for such expenditures.
- **Support** legislation to allow collection of a special assessment in a MSBU that will allow for the implementation of a workplan to extend to 10 years or beyond before the benefit is realized.
- **Support** measures that enhance the effectiveness of existing local revenue sources to meet current and future public service demands.

- **Support** methods to enable local efforts to collect due and payable local taxes, fees, fines and other revenues.
- **Support** continued state efforts for tax reform provided that such efforts remain revenue neutral for local government.
- **Support** continued revision to current law regarding the Communication Services Tax in a manner that is: 1) revenue neutral; 2) simplifies administration and collection of the current tax; 3) provides for a broad and equitable tax base; 4) provides for enhanced stability and reliability as an important revenue source for local government; and 5) provides the opportunity for market-based growth.
- **Support** legislation that would phase-in a reduction and eventual exemption of state sales tax on commercial leases, but preserving and “grandfathering-in” existing local (county) option sales taxes.
- **Support** legislation authorizing collection of state and local discretionary sales tax on remote internet purchases.
- **Support** an increase in funding for the State Aid to Libraries grant program which provides critical matching grant funding for operations to expand the capacity of digital and print resources of local libraries.
- **Support** legislation that allows senior staff to participate in executive sessions as subject matter experts to provide board members with technical knowledge necessary to make informed decisions.
- **Oppose** shifting costs for state programs to local governments without a permanent identified funding source.
- **Oppose** any efforts that seek to modify or weaken the powers and duties of local governments granted under Chapter 125 & Chapter 200, Florida Statutes.

Natural Resources & Growth Management

- **Support** funding request for the Charlotte County Central Sewer Expansion project which includes constructing central wastewater service to 1,933 properties with aging and failing On-Site Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems (septic tanks) that are contributing to the pollution of the impaired water bodies of Charlotte Harbor, the Peace River and the Myakka River.
- **Support** funding request for construction of the Manasota Key 10-year Renourishment plan which provides initial restoration and periodic beach nourishment for two and a half miles of eroding gulf shoreline within Charlotte County.
- **Support** funding for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and/or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to conduct biological and chemical study of the impact of discharges from Lake Okeechobee on water quality on the west coast of Florida.
- **Support** the funding of the Water Protection and Sustainability Program within the Department of Environmental Protection and Water Management Districts for the development of alternative water supplies, water quality improvement projects, and comprehensive water infrastructure needs.
- **Support** legislation that enhances regional and local financial capability to address water supply development with allocation flexibility in all available funding sources.
- **Support** legislation that requires or incentivizes property owners to connect to reclaimed water lines when such lines are available and efforts to limit the issuance of permits for use of ponds and wells on sites where reclaimed water lines are available.

- **Support** a balanced distribution of funds for land acquisition and for water quality and quantity projects throughout the state, with equitable allocation irrespective of a project’s urban or rural nature, or its coastal or inland location.
- **Support** legislation to amend Section 159.17, Florida Statutes, to authorize counties – as well as municipalities – that issue revenue bonds, to place liens that are prior to and on parity with state, county and municipal tax liens, on properties served by any water, sewer or gas systems for service charges until paid in full.
- **Support** legislation that allows a county to opt out from mandatory membership in a regional planning council.
- **Support** the creation of a new dedicated and recurring statutory funding source for beach renourishment projects which accurately reflects the increase in participating programs and future beach and inlet project funding needs. Consider allowing coastal communities to levy the 6th cent of Tourist Development Tax to support the local share of beach renourishment where critical erosion exists.
- **Support** a statutory change to Section 163.3178 that clarifies for state and local officials how risk reduction is evaluated in special flood hazard areas (SFHA), as shown on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).
- **Oppose** legislation that would preempt the ability of local governments to regulate short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods.

Health & Human Services and Healthcare

- **Support** funding to maintain a Community Action Team (CAT) in Charlotte County to provide comprehensive, community-based services to children aged 11 to 21 with a mental health diagnosis or co-occurring substance abuse diagnosis as a lower cost alternative to state funded foster care, residential behavioral health treatment and juvenile justice incarceration.
- **Support** continued funding for community-based free and charitable clinics that provide emergency room diversion and basic safety net health services for the uninsured and indigent.
- **Support** increased funding for core mental health and substance abuse services.
- **Support** legislation that repeals the state statutory preemption of smoking regulation by allowing local governments to enact local regulations that exceed state standards. In lieu of a total repeal of the preemption, **Support** legislation granting local governments the authority to restrict smoking in areas where children are present.
- **Support** efforts to increase supportive housing, employment and education initiatives for people with behavioral health issues and/or disabilities.
- **Support** diverting, medically assisting, or treating mentally ill persons outside of the criminal justice system through alternative community programs, such as Crisis Intervention Teams.
- **Support** providing life-saving interventions, medically-assisted detoxification programs, and diversions from the criminal justice system for those suffering from opioid addiction.
- **Support** establishing a cap on growth in the individual county Medicaid costs under s. 409.915, F.S. to address the cost shifts that result from the transition to a Medicaid enrollee based cost-sharing system.
- **Oppose** any efforts to sweep the Sadowski housing trust fund which provides critical funding for affordable housing.

Transportation & Infrastructure

- **Support** funding request and Florida Recreational Development Assistance Program grant application for the expansion of recreational facilities at the William R. Gaines, Jr. Veterans Memorial Park that will honor the memory of Corporal William R. Gaines, Jr, all Veterans and first responders. Corporal Gaines was a local resident of Charlotte County who was killed in the line of duty in the October 23, 1983 bombing of Marine barracks in Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War.
- **Support** funding of a Florida Recreational Development Assistance Program grant application for the G.C. Herring park which will provide multi-generational outdoor recreation activities including a new playground, multipurpose field a fishing pier and nature trail.
- **Support** efficient and effective government by reducing the requirement for mandatory independent construction engineering and inspections (CEI) services on projects that have less than 50% in state funding.
- **Support** a restructure of the formula and methodology used in the distribution of gas tax funds and a review of the methodology of state prioritization (criteria) and funding for transportation projects.
- **Support** a review of state criteria for roads to be designated SIS (state roads). Charlotte County believes there are roads within our jurisdiction that meet the criteria and should be designated state roads as a part of the SIS.
- **Support** the extension of the “Purple Heart Memorial Highway” designation of I-75 from Marion County to Charlotte County.

Public Safety

- **Support** funding for phase II of the Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting training prop to provide regional training opportunities for all ARFF fire fighters to meet the training requirements of the FAA and FAR 139.
- **Support** efforts to build or increase emergency shelter options for Charlotte County and Southwest Florida.
- **Support** long-term and stable funding for the Clerk of Courts.
- **Oppose** legislation that limits the ability of county EMS providers to be reimbursed for out-of-network transports.
- **Support** maintaining a countywide regulatory system for EMS through the current Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) process.
- **Support** efforts to stop opioid trafficking and increased penalties for dealers and traffickers whose actions result in loss of life.
- **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.
- **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.