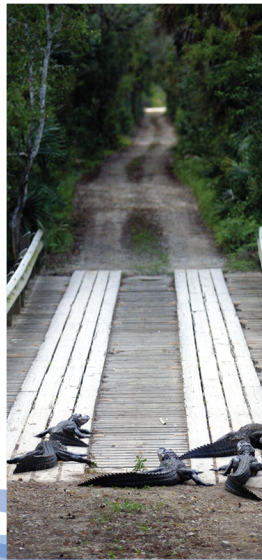




Charlotte County

Board of County Commissioners



2016

State Legislative
Program

2016 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
District 1



Christopher Constance,
Vice Chairman
District 2



Bill Truex, Chairman
District 3



Stephen R. Deutsch
District 4



Tricia Duffy
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 2016 Florida Legislative Session have been incorporated throughout Charlotte County's State Legislative Agenda. The following legislative priorities have been identified by FAC:

- Tax Reform
- Economic Development
- Utility Relocation
- Amendment 1/Beach Renourishment
- Comprehensive Water Policy
- Behavioral Health

2016 State Legislative Agenda

Policy Statements

Support Economic Development and Job Creation

- **Support** cooperation from the executive and legislative branches to develop a regional visitor center in Southwest Florida as well as approval for the Florida Department of Transportation to enter into long-term lease or to convey property located at the now closed rest station on Jones Loop Rd. to Charlotte County for this purpose.
- **Support** the development of economic development and job training programs and innovation clusters.
- **Support** efforts to monitor the National Flood Insurance Protection Program and the State of Florida's response to the NFIP.
- **Support** legislation to amend FS 125.001 to extend the same latitude to counties that cities already have under F.S. 166.0213 in the provision allowing for the governing body to hold joint meetings to receive, discuss and act upon matters of mutual interest within the governing body of an adjacent County.
- **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.

Support Fiscal Responsibility

- **Oppose** shifting costs for state programs to local governments without a permanent identified funding source.
- **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 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** legislation that would eliminate currently existing recapture provisions for homestead and non-homestead property.

Support the Environment

- **Support** funding request for the East West Spring Lake Central Sewer Expansion project which includes constructing central wastewater service to 2,455 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 the remaining costs of the Stump Pass beach renourishment plan which provides erosion control and shoreline stabilization measures including beach nourishment, maintenance dredge bypassing, and stabilizing structures for six miles of eroding gulf and inlet shorelines within the Manasota Barriers, Charlotte County.
- **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** continued engagement of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in a comprehensive monitoring of the cumulative impacts of the implementation of the revised Clean Water Act, or WOTUS rule, on the State of Florida.
- **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 that enhances regional and local financial capacity to address water supply development with allocation flexibility in all available funding sources.
- **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.
- **Oppose** any state-wide water commission or “water czar” which would create another layer of decision making and review of water projects or redefine existing water supply relationships among the state, regional water management districts, and local governments.

Support Public Health

- **Support** 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** 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.

Support Transportation Funding

- **Support** funding request for Burnt Store Road widening from 2-lanes to 4-lanes. The road is a vital transportation link connecting Charlotte County, portions of the City of Punta Gorda, the City of Cape Coral/Lee County to U.S. 41 and 1-75. It is also a critical hurricane evacuation route to enable expeditious traffic flows out of this region during times of such an emergency.
- **Support** funding request for the Charlotte Harbor Walk Phase 1B. Phase 1B includes the construction of a boardwalk, that will provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between the east and west side of US41 and downtown Punta Gorda, allowing for safer access to employment, community parks and downtown Punta Gorda.
- **Support** an increase in the population threshold eligibility criteria for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) to counties with populations of 175,000 residents or less and continued funding of the program.
- **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.
- **Oppose** legislation requiring counties to pay for the relocation of private utilities when such utilities are located within a county-owned right-of-way and must be moved to accommodate a county project.

Support Public Safety

- **Support** funding request for the Charlotte County Justice Center. Expansion of this courthouse is based upon a state determined formula and growth of the employee base of the state. Population, trends, caseload, judgeship and staffing projections all lead to a need for 40% space increase of 78,722 gross square feet to accommodate judicial needs out to year 2032.
- **Support** a permanent and equitable solution for state funding of juvenile detention costs.
- **Support** legislation that allows counties to issue citations under FS 489.127(5)(o) for licensed contractors who are performing outside of the scope of their state issued license.
- **Support** legislation that elucidates wastewater treatment facilities, water and wastewater collection and distribution systems and related construction plans in the public records exemption under FS 119.071(3)(b)1.
- **Support** long-term and stable funding for the Clerk of Courts.