



2025 CITY OF VENICE STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The City of Venice wishes to express its gratitude to the Florida State Legislature for its work to provide the best and highest quality of life for residents of the state and especially, residents of Venice. We are sincerely appreciative of the Legislature's previous support of Venice projects including road widening, beach renourishment, water main replacement and other appropriations benefiting of our citizens. The following priorities have been identified by the Venice City Council. The City of Venice requests your support in addressing these important projects:

Water Plant Production

The City of Venice Utilities Department has received state-level awards for its initiatives in conserving water. In 2013, an upgraded reverse-osmosis membrane was installed at the water plant designed to increase the usable percentage of the raw water intake to 50%. The next efficiency step in systematic improvements in the reverse-osmosis process will include additional membranes to increase the volumetric water output while maintaining the same high-water quality. The new feature will increase potable water production by 10%, or 500,000 gallons per day. The membrane process is highly efficient and will result in an environmental benefit by reducing both the groundwater usage and the waste discharge rate. The enhanced membrane installation is projected to cost \$750,000. The City of Venice is requesting legislative support in the amount of \$375,000.

Water Reclamation Facility Operations

The City of Venice Utilities Department owns and operates a complex system of facilities to manage potable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water to serve its residents. Operation of these facilities consumes a large portion of the City's energy use. The wastewater plant is the largest energy consumer in the Utilities Department system. The department has identified a large-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) model capable of producing energy to support wastewater plant operations. The system floats on water, thereby saving valuable ground space within the wastewater facility; and the Venice plant complex contains a large body of water capable of supporting the solar array.

Under the management of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), a grant program has been established to support wastewater plant operations. The City of Venice intends to request funding from the FDEP program to support installation of a floating solar array to power the Venice wastewater plant. The City's request for FDEP grant funding is \$750,000, in support of a \$6,000,000 total project cost.

Transportation Funding

With assistance from the state Legislature, the City of Venice implemented a multi-year roadway system improvement project. Over a three-year period, the City improved 100% of the roads within City limits. The next phase of local roadway improvements includes a focus on multi-modal transportation design and an emphasis on accessibility and enhanced safety for pedestrians and bike riders, with opportunities for additional options for municipal transportation infrastructure projects. The City works with Sarasota County and state partners in the planning and implementation of multi-modal road upgrades. The City currently is focusing on the expansion and improvement of multi-modal projects in heavily used pedestrian/biking corridors. Venice appreciates the continuation of legislative support enabling the City to undertake these projects.

Beach Renourishment

Hurricane Ian provided a clear reminder of the importance of beach renourishment to protect the safety and welfare of this Florida coastal community. Renourishment provides for critical storm protection and open beach for marine turtle nesting. The beach enhances tourism opportunities and acts as a regional economic driver. The City of Venice appreciates the funding that has been received to date, including annual physical monitoring that is currently funded under an active state grant agreement.

The City requests ongoing legislative support for the statewide beach renourishment and inlet management program, as this will provide funding availability as we move toward the next renourishment event in 2025. The City also continues to support the state as it seeks new methods to resolve erosion issues.

Affordable Housing

Area businesses and critical service providers, including local hospitals, public service professionals, and other skilled workers, have conveyed to the City that they have difficulty finding affordable housing in the Venice area. Additionally, local land and construction costs preclude developers from creating residential units at affordable prices for low and moderate-income workers. Our goal is to create opportunities for working families and our more vulnerable citizens to afford housing and other essential expenses in our community.

The City of Venice supports state appropriations for programs that support acquisition of property and construction of housing units that are affordable to low and middle-income residents (lower strata income workers). The City also requests an increase in funding for CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) and HOME partnership programs to assist in these endeavors.

Support Home Rule

The City of Venice requests the support of legislation that provides for Home Rule authority for cities and counties to make decisions that reflect the unique needs of the community and the wishes of its citizens. It is imperative that the state not impose unfunded mandates or reduce the revenue of local governments by reducing tax-based revenues to cities, such as the Communication Services Tax and the Business Tax.

Incentives for Alternative Energy and Energy Conservation and Efficiency Improvements

The City of Venice encourages the Florida Legislature to provide any incentives possible to encourage citizens to retrofit their homes and businesses with energy efficient, energy production and alternative energy products; and to provide funding opportunities for local governments to use alternative energy products.

The City of Venice Supports the Florida League of Cities' Legislative Priorities for 2025.