



## 2019 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 greatly thankful for previous support of road reconstruction, beach renourishment, and other actions for the benefit of our citizens. The following needs have been identified by Venice City Council. The City of Venice requests your help with these important projects:

### Red Tide Research

Harmful algal blooms are a statewide problem requiring immediate, consistent and sufficient funding to mitigate this issue. The City of Venice gratefully acknowledge the over \$17.3 million that Florida has invested since 2011 through the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) in red tide research, including more than \$5.5 million for a partnership with Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium to study the causes of red tide. However, the unusual high intensity and long duration of this year's *Kerenia brevis* algal bloom suggests that much research and experimentation still needs to be done.

Although \$2.4 million per year for the past seven years on average has been invested by the state through the FWRI, and on average, \$785,000 per year has been transferred to Mote, little headway has been made toward determining the cause of red tide and almost no progress has been made toward the mitigation of this algal bloom. In addition, harmful blue-green algae, attributable to discharges from Lake Okeechobee, continues to find its way into the Gulf of Mexico and may even have a role in exacerbating the red tide bloom.

The City respectfully requests that the State of Florida continue to fund red tide research, preferably at a level at least twice the current level, until a satisfactory mitigation is found for the problem.

In addition to the current increase in funding request, Mote is ready to establish a Harmful Algal Bloom Research Center that may provide answers to not only red tide, but to the blue-green algae problem and many of the other harmful blooms found worldwide. To establish this research center would require an

investment of \$3 million per year for the next five years. The City of Venice respectfully requests that the State of Florida include this annual funding in the next budget cycle.

## **Stormwater Outfall Monitoring and Water Quality Treatment**

This multi-phase project is intended to decrease the intensity and duration of harmful algal blooms, such as this year's *Kerenia brevis*, along the Gulf Coast of Florida. The City of Venice has 16 major stormwater outfalls, several of which discharge stormwater directly across the beach to the Gulf of Mexico.

Stormwater discharges can be a contributor to poor water quality and pollutant loading, which can increase the intensity and duration of harmful algal blooms. Phase 1 of this project is to implement stormwater outfall monitoring to assess the pollutant loading into our coastal waters from the individual outfalls. After the outfall monitoring is completed, a prioritization plan will be developed to identify the highest pollutant contributors and a Phase 2 project list will be created. Phase 2 of this project is to implement structural and non-structural best management practices at the highest priority stormwater outfalls to provide a decrease in pollutant loading at these outfall locations.

The City respectfully requests \$600,000 in funding to implement Phase 1 of this project. Funding for Phase 2 would be included in a future request after the outfall monitoring and prioritization plan is complete.

## **Beach Renourishment**

Renourishing the beach serves to protect the safety and welfare of this Florida coastal community. Renourishment is important for storm protection, marine turtle nesting and as a tourism/economic driver. The City of Venice appreciates the funding that has been received to date, including FY18 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 our next renourishment event in 2025. The City also continues to support the state as it seeks new methods to resolve erosion issues.

## 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.

- A. It is imperative that the state **not impose unfunded mandates or reduce the revenue of local governments** by reducing taxes, such as the Communication Services Tax and the Business Tax, or through the \$50,000 Homestead Exemption, that affect local government.
- B. Provide further **relief from the current requirements in funding 175 and 185 pension plans**, which can only be used for enhancements to existing contracts.
- C. **Repeal of the state law that prohibits Home Rule in regard to new short-term rental** ordinances or amending existing ordinances.

## Increase Programs to Help Homeless, Mental Illness and Addiction, Especially for Veterans

Because a lack of social services increases problems for society, especially for the homeless, those with mental illness, and those with alcohol and drug addictions, the Florida Legislature is encouraged to find means of helping these citizens – with a focus on veterans – in dire need of services. Having homelessness in a community undermines the welfare of all residents.

Developing jobs, reinstating state mental health treatment facilities, and increasing opportunities for veterans and others to receive help to be able to become independent and self-sufficient are examples of ways to improve society now and in the future.

## Transportation Funding

Support legislation that preserves local control of transportation planning, provides equitable transportation funding among municipalities and counties, and provides opportunities for additional options for municipal transportation infrastructure projects.

## **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 and alternative energy products; and to provide funding opportunities for local governments to use alternative energy products.

## **No Oil or Gas Drilling**

The City of Venice is opposed to any drilling for gas or oil in the Gulf of Mexico within 10 miles of its shoreline. The beaches are a natural and economic asset to the area. The City of Venice and other local government entities have joined in a commitment to preserve the ecological balance and natural beauty of the area, which such drilling activities threaten.

## **The City of Venice Supports the Florida League of Cities' Legislative Priorities for 2019.**

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