

Fellow Council Members

Attached is a position paper supporting efforts to protect our environment. The paper repeats much of what has been said concerning the harmful effects of red tide, and the possible behaviors that may contribute to the red tide bloom. I request your support of the recommendations stated in the paper. Some are aligned with the outcomes of the recent Red Tide Special Council meeting.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Bob Daniels". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Bob" is written with a large, looped 'B'. The last name "Daniels" is written with a large, looped 'D' and a trailing flourish.

Bob Daniels

CITY OF VENICE

Policy Position – Achievement of Adopted City Goals

The City of Venice has six adopted policy goals. Annually, the goals are reviewed, updated, and modified as needed. The number one goal as stated in the 2018 adopted City Budget states:

Keep Venice Beautiful and Eco-Friendly

The number one Objective in support of that goal states:

Maintain pristine beaches and gulf waters

The Venice City Council is committed to working towards achievement of the adopted goals. The City Council held a special Council meeting to address the Red Tide. The Council directed staff to develop an educational program to encourage the general public to adopt environmentally safe practices in the use of fertilizers.

Fertilizers are known to provide nutrients that feed algae, including the algae associated with the red tide. Therefore, controlling the use of fertilizers by employing environmentally sound practices can only help in our effort to reduce red tide bloom.

There are other processes and substances in our environment that can also provide nutrients harmful to our effort to control red tide bloom. The other influences include:

- Natural decay of vegetation and its production of nitrogen byproducts
- Animal feces (wild and domesticated) that finds its way into waterways supporting red tide growth

In fact, much scientific research points to the complexity of isolating the causes of nutrient load feeding red tide. That does not mean that we should stop pursuing a solution. It does suggest that we approach the problem with this understanding of multiple contributing elements and develop a plan to systematically attack and reduce the risks.

In Venice, water flows to the gulf from multiple direct and indirect sources. Ten specific stormwater outfalls are among the sources discharging into the gulf. The collective volume of water entering the gulf during heavy rain storms is significant; significant to warrant a close examination of the chemical composition of the discharging water. We believe that animal feces, natural vegetation decay, lawn chemical run off, and potentially other sources including septic systems, may be part of that discharging water composition. What we do not know is how much of each substance is present in the outfalls, and which outfalls produce the heaviest nutrient load. We do know that all are potentially harmful to the environment therefore we should take immediate steps to reduce the risk.

How do we reduce the risk:

PHASE 1

- Educate the public to use preventive measures: curb your domestic animal; pick up after your pets; do not over-fertilize landscaping; follow manufacturer's directions or use professional landscaping companies licensed by the state.

Long Term Plan:

- Council and staff are pursuing grant funds to monitor all of the outfalls discharging into the Gulf.
 - Funding is being requested as part of the City's State-level legislative priorities for 2019
 - Other area granting agencies will be examined for grant programs to support the data collection/ monitoring and corrective strategies components of the City's plan
- Council directed staff to develop an educational program to inform and educate the general public on ways of reducing pollutant risk. This program will be on-going and updated as monitoring and data collection provide additional information on the causes of pollutants and nutrient loading in Venice
- Council and staff will continue to seek additional state support in the form of legislation to protect the City's Home Rule for control of the red tide and related environmental risks
- City staff will examine the City's waste water management system. To examine for possible pollution, all septic systems in the City will be examined for compliance with local and state standards. As part of this examination the legal, financial, and practical implications of converting the private septic systems to connect to the City's domestic sewer system will be reviewed
- City staff will work with the state legislature, local landscaping companies, and the general public to promote control of harmful practices contaminating the environment
- If funding is acquired to establish an outfall monitoring program, the Council will report progress in implementing the program, defining and reporting of the results, and subsequent corrective measures
- If outside funding is not available, given the critical nature of the red tide problem, the Council will consider amendments to the City's budget to support implementation of the steps necessary to initiate the projects listed above.



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.