



DEVELOP A WATER NEEDS ASSESSMENT



The Florida League of Cities calls on the Florida Legislature to annually assess the state's current and projected water resources and water quality infrastructure needs and identify potential sources of funding to meet future demand.

THE KEY POINTS

- 01** Our residents and visitors **require clean water to live healthy lives.** Florida's economy and future depend on it
- 02** Water experts say **we will need tens of billions of dollars in the next 20 years** to address drinking water, wastewater, flood control and pollution
- 03** Thanks to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, we know how much money it will take to sustain the water programs in Florida. But we also know these programs and funding aren't enough to meet our future needs. So, what are we asking for? **A strategic and targeted approach.**
- 04** First, the Legislature should direct the Department of Environmental Protection to **determine Florida's current and future water infrastructure demands.** The assessment will answer the question: exactly how far are we behind with our water infrastructure, and how much money will it take to fix it?
- 05** Second, the Legislature should take a comprehensive look at what other states and countries are doing for water funding and financing. It should **identify potential sources of funding** that Florida might use to address our water infrastructure deficit. Funding and financing options will allow policymakers to develop multiple tools and choices that will help all levels of government.

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SUPPORT FLORIDA BUSINESSES BY UPDATING THE TAX LAW



The Florida League of Cities calls
on the Florida Legislature to
modernize Florida's sales and use
tax laws so that they are fair to
Florida businesses and pave a way
for them to flourish.

THE KEY POINTS

- 01** Our **current system favors foreign businesses** over those that are brick and mortar. We need to put those foreign businesses on a level playing field with our local businesses.
- 02** Our **sales tax law is out of date** and hurts Florida businesses. Florida is one of only two states that levy a sales tax but haven't created a sales tax policy for foreign businesses.
- 03** We need to **support and protect our homegrown businesses**, which provide jobs, pay property taxes and support the local economy by sponsoring sports teams and donating to nonprofits. These businesses are depending on us to do the right thing and help our local economies to thrive.
- 04** Homegrown businesses build **strong communities** by sustaining vibrant city centers and linking neighbors in a web of economic and social relationships.

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GIVE CITIES TOOLS TO ADDRESS SHORT-TERM RENTALS



The Florida League of Cities supports a collaboration between the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) and cities to ensure that short term rental properties abide by state and local regulations. The League also calls on the Florida Legislature to restore local zoning authority for short-term rentals.

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THE KEY POINTS

- 01 This is a **local zoning issue**. Commercial activity in neighborhoods is regulated for a good reason: to protect residents and ensure the right infrastructure is there.
- 02 The DBPR's Office of Inspector General 2018 Audit Report found that the agency has struggled to meet its own approved performance standards for lodging inspection measures and will continue to struggle. Based on these findings, the **DBPR should collaborate with local code enforcement officers to protect residential neighborhoods**.
- 03 Everyone's **property rights should be balanced**. Unruly behavior and issues with parking and public safety destroy the **residential character of our neighborhoods**. Our residents suffer while corporations profit.
- 04 Short-term rentals are **overtaking residential neighborhoods** and **creating public safety risks**. Residents don't know the people next door. Sex offenders don't have to register. Neighbors are less likely to confront strangers when problems or nuisances arise.
- 05 Additionally, rentals are causing a **drain on law enforcement services**, when issues should be handled by code enforcement instead. Because police are forced to respond to parking and house parties, it means fewer officers focusing on stopping crimes and keeping communities safe.
- 06 Unregulated short-term rentals make the affordable housing crisis worse. **Homes are turned into mini-hotels**, which reduces the long-term rentals available and **causes a housing shortage for working people**.
- 07 Seven in 10 voters say **local rules should govern short-term rentals**. Nearly three-fourths want local elected officials in charge.

SUPPORT PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION



The Florida League of Cities calls on the Florida Legislature to take a stand in support of property rights protection (the Bert J. Harris Jr. Act) to avoid an explosion of lawsuits against cities.

THE KEY POINTS

- 01 Protect property owners.** Some lawmakers want blanket entitlements that don't consider every person's property rights. If private property rights are changed for one property owner, they would change for everyone. The law wouldn't consider the size or density of property, historical listings or other strict zoning standards. There could be unintended consequences. Those special interests seeking private gain? This gives them a back door.
- 02 Avoid excessive lawsuits.** This would lead to a lawyer's dream because it would be easier to sue than reach a resolution with cities and counties. The Bert Harris Act was never intended to be a class-action lawsuit offering massive rewards for those who aren't willing to settle.
- 03 Taxpayers would pay the price.** Cities could expect to get stuck dealing with lawsuits, and residents could expect higher taxes to cover litigation costs. Legislators should prioritize community needs.
- 04 More changes to the Bert Harris Act are unnecessary.** Legal procedures already protect the rights of property owners who might be unintentionally harmed by a variance.

The Bert J. Harris Jr. Act of 1995 gives landowners a way to seek compensation when a local government takes action that impacts the use/potential use of their property. The act is detailed and fair. It allows local governments to negotiate with property owners who are filing a claim and calls on courts to consider the unique conditions of each claim. Many Bert Harris claims are negotiated locally without going to trial. This approach saves taxpayer dollars and proves that the current system is working.

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MAKE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING MORE FLEXIBLE



The Florida League of Cities calls on the Florida Legislature to drive Florida forward to a safer future by helping cities fund transportation infrastructure.

THE KEY POINTS

- 01** The growth in population, visitors and the economy means **our highways are congested**. This public safety issue means **slower 911 response times** and **sluggish evacuations**. We would do better if we stopped wasting money on gas in idling cars and spent it on roads instead.
- 02** Our **road system is in disrepair**. When we improve access to highways and cut travel delays and transportation costs, the economy benefits, as do all the people who live and work here. **We must prioritize safety by preparing for technology changes** that are already beginning in transportation.
- 03** Only a handful of states – including Florida – have failed to increase gas taxes to fund infrastructure. If we wait to fund our roads, **the costs of supplies and labor will only go up**, while **the quality of our roads goes down**. It's like a sick person waiting too long to see a doctor.
- 04** Federal, state and county governments have multiple ways to pay for transportation demands, but cities are limited. To prosper, Florida cities need greater funding flexibility. **Let us fund local solutions with local dollars.**

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DEDICATE RESOURCES FOR MUNICIPAL CYBERSECURITY



The Florida League of Cities calls on the Florida Legislature to provide the resources necessary to keep cybercriminals from compromising data on citizens and businesses that is collected by cities.

THE KEY POINTS

- 01** More than ever, Florida's **city governments rely on information technology** to provide vital services to residents and businesses, and **these services must not be interrupted**. To provide these services, cities collect key information. As a result, we have become targets of cybercriminals.
- 02** Criminals continue to develop **sophisticated methods of attack**. Small governments don't have the resources to address these **constantly evolving threats**.
- 03** The fact that cities have **cybersecurity insurance makes us even more of a target**. Criminals can use cybercrimes against cities to gain access to insurance funds.
- 04** Cities need **technical assistance, grant funding and training**. This will help us assess threats, improve infrastructure improvements and protect data. Cities must protect information about law enforcement personnel and building plans for government buildings and infrastructure. We also need a study of the cybersecurity risks tied to the Sunshine Law.
- 05** The **Florida Center for Cybersecurity (Cyber Florida)** can do this work. By **dedicating resources**, you have the opportunity to address this growing threat.
- 06** Florida can **set the standard** for ensuring the cybersecurity of local governments, citizens and businesses.

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CITIES NEED CERTAINTY IN FUNDING TO PLAN FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING



The Florida League of Cities calls on the Florida Legislature to support legislation that requires all money in the Sadowski State and Local Housing Trust Fund (Trust Fund) be used only for affordable housing programs.

THE KEY POINTS

- 01 Everyone needs housing that is affordable** so they can pay for transportation, medical care, clothing and food. Affordable housing is for our workforce, the disabled, the elderly and our veterans.
- 02 Florida is in a housing crisis.** There are more than 922,000 households with "very low income" in Florida paying more than 50 percent of their income for housing.
- 03 Planning for affordable housing is as important as planning for hurricanes.** Cities must be certain of funding so that they can plan and implement a multi-year approach to the housing crisis.
- 04** Cities already are using incentives and zoning regulations, and they are waiving impact fees, if they are able, to make housing more affordable. Cities already are using the tools in their toolbox, but **one tool that could provide certainty is beyond our control: the Trust Fund**
- 05** Investing now will save money in the long run. **Fully devoting the Trust Fund to affordable housing is supported by a diverse group** including chambers of commerce, realtors, the Florida Home Builders Association, the Florida Housing Coalition and the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- 06** Fully devoting money in the Trust Fund to affordable housing will add 30,000 jobs and will stabilize communities. Cities will have more funds available for public safety, schools and transportation. **The positive economic impact will be \$4.4 billion**

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