

# Charlotte County

Legislative Agenda 2013-2014



Photo by: Patty Stefan

## Charlotte County Commissioners

**Ken Doherty**

District 1

**Christopher Constance**

District 2

**Bill Truex**

District 3

**Stephen R. Deutsch**

District 4

**Tricia Duffy**

District 5

As government closest to the people, local governments' role in the representation of Florida's citizens should be respected by honoring home rule and charter county authority, and avoiding preemption of local authority. Local governments' desire to keep its taxpayers' burdens low should be recognized by refraining from unfunded mandates and cost shifts.



## Top Priorities

### County Health Department (CHD) Funding

Charlotte County pays a significantly higher per capita local contribution for CHDs compared to other similarly sized counties throughout the State.

**STATEMENT:** *Support greater equity in state funding of CHDs. SUPPORT reinstating the ability of CHDs to provide primary care and direct patient care services, particularly in communities without adequate substitutes or alternative providers for these services.*

### Gas Tax Funds

Of the total gas taxes paid at the pump in Charlotte County, only about 40% come back for road projects within the County. The remaining portion is utilized to fund state and federal projects outside of the County. In 2011, \$40 million was paid at the pump and only \$16M was spent within the County.

**STATEMENT:** *Support a restructure of the formula and methodology used in the distribution of gas tax funds. Support a review of the methodology of state prioritization for transportation projects.*

### Juvenile Justice

As demonstrated by the ruling of Okaloosa, et al. v. DJJ, counties paid a disproportionate share for housing juveniles for a number of years.

**STATEMENT:** *Provide reimbursement or credit all counties for overpayments to DJJ in accordance with the decision in Okaloosa, et al. v. DJJ. Support utilizing the appropriate state/county cost share as determined in the lawsuit as the basis for calculating county cost shares in future years.*

### National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

As a result of numerous catastrophic weather events over the past 10 years, the NFIP has been operating at a substantial deficit. The Biggert-Waters Act was passed by Congress in 2012 to end government subsidies to the program by pricing all policies based on actual risk. Although the fundamental idea behind the Act is understandable, the current process for implementing policy increases will have drastic effects on flood insurance costs for homeowners and will greatly reduce property values in the Gulf Coast States.

**STATEMENT:** *Support State efforts to ensure that the implementation of the Act is fair and affordable for Florida homeowners and businesses.*

### State Roads Serving State Parks

Legislation was introduced in last year's transportation bill that would have authorized the Florida Department of Transportation to maintain roads serving state parks, which would provide a significant benefit to the County.

**STATEMENT:** *Seek legislation authorizing the Florida Department of Transportation to maintain county roads that provide access to property in the state park system.*

### Water/Wastewater Infrastructure

Charlotte County is required to build infrastructure and provide reclaimed water to its residents, however, pre-existing commercial developments are not mandated to hook up to the new reclaimed water lines if they already have alternate water sources. This creates a financial burden for the County by the need to fund reclaimed water infrastructure without an offsetting revenue source or commercial disposal site.

**STATEMENT:** *Mandate commercial developments to connect to reclaimed water when it's available and only be permitted to use their alternate water supply as back-up. Support funding for the Charlotte County sewer expansion project.*

## Fiscal Responsibility

### **Consultants Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA)**

Support revisions to the Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act to allow costs and fees to be a factor in the selection process for engineering and design services.

### **Public Records Law**

Support creation of a temporary exemption from public records law to keep cost estimates of construction project costs confidential until after the procurement process.

### **Code Fine Liens**

Support code fine liens being on parity with state, county, municipal and tax liens.

### **Internet Sales Tax/"Main Street" Fairness Act**

Support legislation that promotes an equitable, competitive environment between brick-and-mortar businesses and remote business establishments conducting business in Florida.

## Transportation

### **Railroad Crossing Improvements**

Amend the Florida Statutes regulating public railroad crossings to require railroads to provide detailed cost estimates when performing railroad crossing improvements requested by local governments. Provide that if the cost estimate is rejected, the local government may perform the construction itself.

## Public Safety

### **Pain Clinics**

Oppose preemption of the regulation of pain management clinics to the state.

## Public Health & Environment

### **Smoking Regulation**

Expand the Clean Indoor Air Act to allow local governments to control smoking on county-owned property, including outdoor areas.

## Job Creation & Economic Development

### **Develop Regional Talent Supply and Innovation Clusters**

Invest in strategic economic development priority training programs, both regionally and statewide.

### **Economic Development Programs**

Fund State economic development programs aggressively.

### **Enterprise Zones**

Maintain the Enterprise Zones as an incentive for community redevelopment efforts.

## Funding Requests

### **Parkside Community Redevelopment Area: \$1.5M**

Parkside is a 1,100 acre mixed use neighborhood that serves as a center for Charlotte County activity. Parkside consists of one of the County's largest and most developed business and residential centers, which includes the County's two main hospitals, over 600 businesses, and approximately 8,000 residents. In recent years, the district has been in severe decline. The County created a CRA to redevelop the community and worked with the citizens to develop a revitalization plan. The County has spent over \$5M in the past two years implementing that plan and is seeing positive results.

**REQUEST:** Seeking \$1.5M to continue the implementation of the Parkside revitalization plan. This funding would supplement \$5M that the County has recently invested in the plan. Specifically, the funds would be used to create walking paths throughout the community and to build children's recreational equipment to enhance a neighborhood park. These improvements would play a significant role in making the area more attractive to residents and investors.

### **Harborwalk, Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Area: \$1.2M**

Charlotte Harbor CRA is located along the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary and is one of the oldest developed areas in Charlotte County, dating back to 1872. Lack of infrastructure has resulted in blighted conditions and disinvestment from the private sector. The County developed a CRA to revitalize the area with a focus on attracting new private sector investment. To date, the CRA has invested over \$8M in the area.

**REQUEST:** Seeking \$1.2M to enhance the Harborwalk project, which will provide a gateway to the community by creating recreation areas, boardwalks, and fishing locations. This funding would supplement \$4M that the County will be expending to construct the facilities in 2014. Specifically, the funds would be used to enhance the connection to the Harbor by allowing additional land acquisition; improving roads and drainage; and developing walking trails that will connect to a County park.

### **Public Sewer Expansion: \$10M**

Many homes in Charlotte County were built in the 1950s-1970s and are still being served by their original on-site wastewater treatment systems. A considerable number of these old and failing systems are within 150 feet of Charlotte Harbor, an impaired water body, and its' direct waterway tributaries and therefore are contributing to pollution of the Harbor. The County is in the process of implementing the first phase of a multi-year \$450M public sewer expansion program to address this issue.

**REQUEST:** Seeking \$10M to assist in construction of the first phase of the sewer expansion program. This funding would supplement a portion of the \$30M that the County will be expending on the project and offset the connection cost for homeowners.

Please contact Charlotte County Administration at 941.743.1582 for additional information.