



# 2023 State Legislative Program



## Guiding Principles

1. *Maintain the integrity of home rule power which allows the development and implementation of community-based solutions to local problems, including the priorities of our partner organizations and agencies.*
2. *Oppose unfunded mandates that impact local government's ability to control its budget.*
3. *Support adequate state funding for constitutional officers required to perform duties on behalf of the state.*
4. *Support fully funding the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund.*
5. *Support a dedicated recurring source of funding for beach nourishment.*
6. *Support the development of a Statewide Climate Resiliency Plan and a funding source to assist local communities who have implemented plans to combat sea level rise.*
7. *Support the continuation of policies that protect Florida's natural resources and scenic beauty, including the prohibition of any and all oil drilling or exploration efforts in state waters.*
8. *Support maintaining the integrity of Tampa Bay Water as the regional water supplier.*
9. *Support state funding for the Arts and cultural institutions.*
10. *Support the prioritization of state funding to assist with local and regional infrastructure improvements, including transportation, septic to sewer conversion, damaged sanitary sewer laterals, and wastewater systems.*
11. *Support innovative funding strategies that address the declining revenue source of transportation funding to adequately address future transportation needs.*

## Priorities

### Occupational Licensing of Specialty Contractors

*SUPPORT* legislation that amends s 163.211 F.S. to allow for the licensing of specialty contractors and provides them the ability to continue to operate independently.

### Professional Landscape Maintenance Certification

*SUPPORT* legislation that maintains local governments' ability to certify landscape maintenance professionals.

### Waste-to-Energy Facilities

*SUPPORT* efforts that provide for additional revenue to offset solid waste enterprise expenses and capital costs for waste-to-energy facilities owned by local governments.

### Greater Seminole Area Recreation District

*SUPPORT* legislation that dissolves the Greater Seminole Area Recreation District and transfers District property to Pinellas County.

## Appropriations

*SUPPORT* funding for the County's appropriation requests for the following projects:

- Airco Infrastructure Improvements
- Weedon Island Preserve Salt Marsh Restoration
- Special Needs Emergency Shelter Generators

## **Occupational Licensing of Specialty Contractors**

In 2021, Chapter 2021-214, Laws of Florida (the “Act”; also referred to as HB 735) preempted counties from having local occupational licensing programs with the exception of any licensing of occupations authorized by general law. The bill specifically prohibited county governments from requiring a license for a person whose job scope did not substantially correspond to that of a contractor or journeyman licensed by the Construction Industry Licensing Board, and specifically precluded local governments from requiring a license for: painting, flooring, cabinetry, interior remodeling, handyman services, driveway or tennis court installation, decorative stone, tile, marble, granite, or terrazzo installation, plastering, stuccoing, caulking, canvas awning installation, and ornamental iron installation.

The Pinellas County Construction Licensing Department has determined this legislation will negatively impact approximately 1,100 specialty contractors currently licensed in Pinellas County alone. As a result, specialty contractors will no longer have the ability to obtain permits and will have the following options:

- 1) “Test Up” and obtain a General, Residential, or Commercial Contractor License from the State;
- 2) Subcontract with a Licensed General Contractor; or
- 3) Perform unpermitted work

## **Professional Landscape Maintenance Certification**

When s. 163.211, F.S., takes full effect on July 1, 2023, it will eliminate the Landscape Best Management Practices training requirement for Landscape Professionals in Pinellas County. Removing this requirement will reduce one of the primary tools used to address nutrient pollution as required by the State.

Additionally, counties throughout the state have adopted fertilizer ordinances which will be effected by the removal of local licensing. Pinellas County's fertilizer ordinance includes a ban on the retail sale of fertilizer that contains nitrogen or phosphorus during the rainy season. This provision is grandfathered and if required to change the ordinance to remove the certification requirement for landscape professionals, the retail sale provision and other provisions included in the ordinance will be eliminated. This will impact all counties that have a fertilizer ordinance in place to protect water quality.

## **Waste-to-Energy Facilities**

During the 2022 Legislative Session, SB 1764 was signed into law. SB 1764 created the Municipal Solid Waste-to-Energy Program to provide financial assistance grants and incentive grants counties who operate municipal solid waste-to-energy facilities. The purpose of the program is to incentivize the production and sale of energy from municipal solid waste-to energy facilities while also reducing the amount of waste that would otherwise be disposed of in a landfill. SB 1764 originally funded the program in the amount of \$100M annually, but the funding was removed from the bill prior to being passed by the legislature.

Based on energy generated at Pinellas County’s Waste-to-Energy facility in previous years, Pinellas County would be eligible for up to \$8.9M annually.

## **Greater Seminole Area Recreation District**

The Greater Seminole Area Recreation District (District) was created by Special Act of the Legislature in 1980. The Special Act gave the District authority to levy a .5 mill ad valorem tax for three (3) years in order to purchase a piece of land in unincorporated Seminole from the School District to be used for youth sports.

Since 1983, the District has been a landlord of the SYAA sports complex without taxing authority. The Board appoints individuals to the District each year and they meet once a year to fulfill statutory requirements contained within the Special Act. The District voted in 2021 request the Legislature to dissolve the District by amending the Special Act. Once dissolved, the District’s property would be transferred to Pinellas County.