

2019 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

Anyone that cares for our Indian River Lagoon or other treasures of our environment was disappointed with the big picture of the Florida legislature's response to Florida's water crisis. **Not One** single protective water quality bill passed and Florida Forever only received a fraction (\$33 million) of the \$300 million that is constitutionally allocated in Amendment One. Sen. Debbie Mayfield's comprehensive "Clean Waterways Act" (SB 1758) sailed through the senate but there was never a house companion, so it died. Senator Mayfield's SB 1278 addressing the growing problem of biosolids (sewage sludge) disposal passed the Senate unanimously but died on the House floor due to the lack of a companion.

One positive highlight, the budget passed with funding for environmental projects including water quality projects. However, the bulk of that funding is committed to Everglades and South Florida. This year's environmental funding is only 0.003% more than last year.

The 2019 legislative session brought three new projects to Brevard:

- 1) Brevard County Septic to Sewer Conversion - \$5000,000
This will support septic to sewer conversions for 1,019 homes in Brevard County, removing an estimated 33,500 pounds of nitrogen pollution from entering the Indian River Lagoon each year.
- 2) Palm Bay Turkey Creek Muck Removal Feasibility Study - \$160,000
The feasibility study, environmental assessment and engineering alternative analysis will be conducted to establish the best avenue to restoring Turkey Creek to its pre-1950 condition.
- 3) Florida Institute of Technology's Restore Inflow Research - \$800,000
Researchers with the Florida Tech Indian River Lagoon Institute will continue their work to find solutions for improving water quality in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). The Restore Inflow study is investigating the impacts of restoring historical ocean inflows to the IRL via a weir spillway

To put this in perspective, the \$1.46 million allocated to Brevard is about what Brevard takes in every 12 days with its ½ cent sales tax for the lagoon.