



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

September 18, 2012

Mr. Joe Collins
Chair, Governing Board
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

Dear Mr. Collins:

In accordance with Section 373.536, Florida Statutes, I have reviewed the South Florida Water Management District's Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-13. I want to applaud the District for working cooperatively with the Department of Environmental Protection (the Department) in refocusing the resources of your District on the core missions of water supply, flood protection, water quality and natural systems.

I want to extend my appreciation to the Governing Board and the staff for its continued protection of Florida's water resources despite challenging economic times. Your investment of \$87.6 million in Fiscal Year 2012-13 will implement the first phases of my Everglades restoration plan. This 12-year, \$880 million restoration plan is to build reservoirs, unblock flow ways, control the infiltration of pollution and expand man-made wetlands to restore the clean and natural flow of water to the Everglades. I am also pleased to see progress on America's Everglades from a personal perspective - the tour of the Everglades provided by your staff allowed for an up-close and extensive understanding of the unique ecosystem that is the River of Grass.

I would like to personally commend the Governing Board for holding the ad valorem tax rate at the same rate as last year and thereby lowering the tax burden for citizens. I understand this is a difficult decision, but one that recognizes governmental growth can not outpace that of the private sector.

Consistent with the changes in law, pursuant to Chapter 2012-126, Laws of Florida, I am approving the District's Fiscal Year 2012-13 Tentative Budget.

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I want to commend all the Districts for working with the Department to ensure consistency across district boundaries while providing the most responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Moving forward, I ask that the Districts continue with consistency efforts and with the refinement of a common set of performance metrics to demonstrate stewardship of taxpayer resources while focusing on the core mission of protecting and developing water resources for current and future generations. I would also like each District to review existing contracts and lease agreements and seek price concessions from vendors. I have attached a list of objectives I wish each District to pursue moving forward.

I want to thank you and your fellow Governing Board Members for your commitment to serving Floridians, and I look forward to working with you during the coming year, as we continue to strive for the most efficient and effective manner to protect Florida's water resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rick Scott
Governor

cc: Melissa Meeker, Executive Director
Secretary Herschel Vinyard, Department of Environmental Protection

ISSUES TO ADDRESS IN THE COMING YEAR

Consistency

Although the Districts have made great strides towards achieving consistency in their budget and regulatory processes, there are still a few issues to work out. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) will work with the Districts to finalize these consistency issues.

Vehicle Maintenance Standards

- Report on the development of baseline vehicle maintenance data and the use of this data to determine a cost effective vehicle replacement standard.

Structure and Staff Nomenclature

- Report on the progress of the development of a standardized classification for non-managerial positions.

Staff Levels/Reorganization

- Develop a method of regularly evaluating staffing levels to ensure that staffing is consistent with programmatic needs.

Salary Range

- Evaluate the common pay plan set for finalization in October 2012 between the NFWFMD, SJRWMD, SRWMD and SWFWMD, and then compare it to that of the SFWMD to determine whether a common plan is a feasible option for all Districts.

Health Insurance

- Report on the feasibility study of strategies to realize cost savings, while maintaining benefit levels.

Retiree Health Subsidies

- Districts will report on the progress of their phase-out plans and conversion to a standard retiree health subsidy identical with the State's.

Metrics

DEP has begun tracking Water Management District performance on mission critical topics, both quarterly and annually. This information is used to assess the effectiveness of District work processes, such as consumptive use and environmental resource permitting, and to gauge progress toward District goals, such as meeting future water supply needs and protecting natural systems. The metrics have not been implemented for a full year and are being evaluated to determine which of the metrics will prove most useful for performance evaluation of the Districts. This information will be included in the next Tentative Budget review.

Contract and Lease Renewals

Governor Scott has asked each state agency falling under his purview to examine their existing contracts and seek price concessions from their vendors. Each Water Management District is encouraged, regarding contracts or lease agreements, to seek these same price concessions from their vendors for existing contracts. When considering lease agreements, office space should be utilized in the most efficient manner possible with a focus on saving taxpayer dollars.