WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Water shapes nearly every aspect of life in Florida, from the drinking water supplied to homes to the rivers, springs, and coastlines that sustain tourism, agriculture, and daily life. Protecting these resources, together with the broader environment on which counties depend, is among local government's most consequential responsibilities. Continued growth requires counties to plan ahead, manage risk, and respond to environmental pressures that vary by geography and community. FAC recognizes that counties need the tools and flexibility to meet these challenges in ways that reflect local conditions rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Protecting Florida's water and natural resources is also a shared undertaking. FAC is committed to working with the state to align local and statewide goals, preserve meaningful county authority, and ensure counties serve as partners in shaping and implementing environmental policy.

WATER

A. Water Quality, Supply, and Funding: Water quality and water supply are inseparable. Nutrient pollution, stormwater, wastewater, septic systems, agricultural and residential runoff, and emerging contaminants affect communities differently across the state. Counties need recurring and flexible funding, predictable regulatory processes, and the ability to prioritize projects that reflect local water conditions, infrastructure needs, and adopted plans. FAC supports continued state investment in water quality restoration, water supply development, and local water infrastructure, and supports a comprehensive, source-based approach that aligns state and regional funding decisions with county priorities that protects all waterbodies.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

A. Shared Governance, Conservation, and Local Authority: Florida's natural systems anchor the state's economy, public health, and quality of life. Protecting them requires close coordination among counties, water management districts, and state agencies, as well as policies that recognize the different environmental conditions facing inland, coastal, rural, and urban communities. Counties play a central role in water quality, waste management, conservation, land use, resilience, and local implementation of state environmental policy. A balanced approach protects natural resources while allowing communities to grow and thrive. FAC supports sustained funding and sound policy that preserve a meaningful county role in environmental decision-making, protect environmentally sensitive lands and wildlife corridors, and allow counties to balance conservation, economic opportunity, and responsible community growth.

B. Resilience and Mitigation: Resilient infrastructure is central to protecting Florida's communities from impactful water occurrences which impose numerous threats. Sea level

rise and increased periods of intense rainfall threaten to flood many areas of the state. Some of these threats require local, state, and federal responses. FAC supports legislative and budget policies that recognize the long term value of resilience and mitigation, provide flexible and recurring funding, and allow counties to prioritize investments offering the greatest local and regional benefit.

C. Waste Management, Recycling, and Contamination Response: Counties play a direct role in waste management, recycling, mosquito control, and contamination response. These responsibilities require reliable funding and flexibility to address changing local conditions, environmental risks, and public health needs. FAC supports policies and dedicated funding that help counties manage solid waste and recycling programs, maintain mosquito control efforts, and respond to contamination risks.

D. Beaches, Waterways, and Natural Systems and Biological Nuisances: Florida's beaches, coastlines, waterways and conservation lands are environmental and economic assets. Beach tourism alone generates billions of dollars annually and supports hundreds of thousands of Florida jobs, making coastal health a direct driver of local and state revenue. Beach erosion, coral reef decline, invasive species, harmful algal blooms, and other coastal and biological nuisances can affect tourism, public infrastructure, flood-control systems, water quality, habitat and coastal economies. FAC supports sustained state investment and coordinated local, regional, and state action to protect Florida's beaches, waterways, and natural systems from erosion, degradation, invasive species, and other environmental threats.

FEDERAL

A. Water Resources and Coastal Protection: Federal water infrastructure, flood protection, beach renourishment, coral reef conservation, and flood insurance programs are critical to Florida's counties. Timely federal action helps counties protect residents, maintain infrastructure, and recover from storms and other water-related threats. FAC supports full federal funding and timely reauthorization of the nation's water resources infrastructure programs, for continued federal investment in beach renourishment and coral reef conservation, and flood insurance reforms that keep coverage affordable and available to Florida property owners.

B. Offshore Oil Drilling: Florida's coastal economy, tourism industry, and natural resources depend on clean, healthy coastlines. Expanded offshore drilling creates environmental and economic risks that are inconsistent with Florida's long-term coastal protection goals. FAC opposes new offshore oil drilling off Florida's coasts and supports maintaining protections that safeguard Florida’s coastal communities, economy and natural resources from those risks.