



AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT

4000 Gateway Centre Boulevard #100 · Pinellas Park, FL
33782
727.570.5151 Ext. 40
<http://www.tbrpc.org/abm>

MEETING MINUTES

Legislative Review Committee

November 22, 2021, 2:00 PM

Meeting Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Call To Order / Welcome

Alana Todd called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM

2. Introductions

Alana Todd – TBRPC

Brad Furman – Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

John Ovink – Friends of the Hillsborough River

Chris Pratt – Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County

Chris Anastasiou – Southwest Florida Water Management District

Amber Smith – Southwest Florida Water Management District

Maya Burke – Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Ed Sherwood – Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Jessica Lewis – Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Commissioner Charlie Justice – Pinellas County

Chris Cooley – Port Tampa Bay

Kelly Thomas – City of St. Petersburg

Stephen Neely – University of South Florida

Kevin Shelton – Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions

Sally Thompson – Tampa Bay Conservancy

Sheila Schneider – Pinellas County

Shawn College – Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission

3. Public Comment / Announcements

4. Florida Policy Survey: Conservation and Environmental Policy – *Dr. Stephen Neely, University of South Florida*

Researchers at the University of South Florida conducted a statewide survey of 600 Floridians to measure public opinion on a variety of current policy issues. [The report](#) summarizes attitudes and opinions regarding conservation and environmental policy

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this meeting, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council at (727) 570-5151 Ext. 10 within three working days of the meeting.

issues in the state. The survey included a representative sample of Floridians, fielded between July 15th and 25th, 2021. The results show strong, bipartisan support for environmental policy and conservation reforms. Floridians overwhelmingly approve, 90% of Democrats and Republicans, of the FL Wildlife Corridor Act. There is large support for reforestation, carbon taxes, and stricter regulations on agricultural fertilizers.

Comments:

- Mr. Kevin Shelton asked about the difference between “independents” vs “uncertainty” responses to which Dr. Neely replied that there is a need to understand the self-identified independent voter more.
- Dr. Chris Anastasiou asked about next steps in terms of process and digging deeper into the issues considering the high-level trends in the survey results. Dr. Neely reported a need for expertise regarding what to ask and what is possible. He explained the need to build partnerships to write survey questions that inform current efforts, are tangible, and lead to legislative actions. He further clarified that the data does not speak to the efficacy of policy, rather they demonstrate public approval. Dr. Anastasiou added that this is a great opportunity to capitalize on consensus, but there is a need to get the science right.
- Senate Bill 64 (passed last year) was discussed, which mandates the use of wastewater.
- Mr. Ed Sherwood asked about costs related to the survey. Dr. Neely stated that he does research consulting work and paid for the survey himself, approx. \$2,800, which is less than one would pay hiring a survey company. State-wide surveys cost more.

5. Legislative Review Committee Strategic Planning – *Entire Committee*

The mission, goals, and leadership of the Legislative Review Committee were discussed. The Committee reviewed priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

Comments:

- Ms. Thompson recommended looking at previous bills the ABM has supported and tracking new bills that are in-line with previous support.
- Mr. Sherwood discussed the bills TBEP is currently tracking, including those related to wastewater/sewage systems and others identified by the TBEP Policy Board in the week prior to the meeting.
- Missing members identified include a Florida Department of Environmental Protection representative and local legislators. Students from Stetson could potentially help with tracking and bill details.
- Mr. Brad Furman asked whether the goal of the committee is to form a consensus on issues or just a forum to discuss items at hand. Ms. Thompson replied that the committee has been a sounding box, but that both objectives would be productive. Ms. Thompson stated that the Legislative Review Committee should be a forum for discussion that should be passed on to the full Agency to make a decision.
- Ms. Maya Burke stated that there is a challenge to getting membership right and making everyone comfortable. The value of the ABM is as the “Voice of the Bay,” but taking a position on issues might create discomfort among some.



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- Whether or not this committee falls under Sunshine Laws dictates what the committee can do – fact finding vs making recommendations/decisional.
- Ms. Lewis suggested the committee take this year to track bills, develop the committee and membership, and get prepared for next year’s session.
- In determining the scope of bills relevant to the committee, Ms. Thompson suggested looking at all levels of government (federal, state, and local) on a case-by-case basis if pertinent to Tampa Bay. She reported that the committee previously looked at state level bills primarily, but years ago the committee looked at federal too.
- Ms. Amber Smith, new governmental affairs position with SWFWMD, offered assistance in tracking some bills, although she covers local-level laws more so than state. She recommended that the committee prioritize tracking, strengthening knowledge of bills and processes, and education.
- Attendees discussed some of the bill tracking already underway, suggesting a role of the committee could be to pull together work already being done, such as that by FL League of Cities, to reduce duplication of efforts.
- Mr. Chris Cooley offered to forward legislation he comes across on the Port Committee.

6. Other Items

- a. Next Meeting dates and topic ideas
 - Attendees identified January 13, 2022 at 2pm as the next meeting time.
- b. Bay Soundings article ideas

7. Adjourn

- a. Meeting adjourned at 3:37 PM