



SIERRA CLUB

FLORIDA CHAPTER

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1000 Friends of Florida and Sierra Club Florida Chapter Release M-CORES: A Detour Around Accountability

August 20, 2020 —1000 Friends of Florida and Sierra Club Florida Chapter have partnered on a just-released paper, [M-CORES: A Detour Around Accountability](#), on financial and procedural issues associated with the M-CORES toll roads. It draws attention to the lack of ongoing gubernatorial and legislative oversight for a project that could cost upwards of \$26.4 billion over the next decade, without any preliminary determination of need or financial feasibility.

Major findings include:

- Various segments of M-CORES have been planned since the early 2000s, **only to be shot down by Govs. Charlie Crist and Rick Scott and the Florida Department of Transportation** due to lack of financial feasibility.
- The M-CORES legislation was skillfully crafted to incorporate the project into FDOT's five-year work program. This means **it is virtually impossible for the Legislature or Gov. DeSantis to halt M-CORES** without specific legislation to that effect.
- The project bypassed the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Corridor Planning Process, meaning that **the project is barreling forward without any preliminary determination of need or financial feasibility**.
- The entire project could cost **\$26.4 billion or more over the next 10 years**, based on numbers developed by the independent Florida TaxWatch and costs for Florida's Wekiva Parkway.
- In the last (2019-20) and current (2020-21) fiscal years, **\$142.5 million has already been allocated** for the M-CORES toll roads, again without any determination of need or feasibility.
- **Motorized vehicle owners across Florida** are subsidizing M-CORES, to the tune of **\$57.7 million** this year alone.

- More -

- **Florida toll road users** from across the state are also significantly subsidizing M-CORES, including **\$50 million** this year alone being reallocated from turnpike tolls to M-CORES, taking money from needed repairs and improvements to toll roads in other parts of the state.
- Due to the impacts of COVID-19, state economists have slashed \$5.4 billion from expected state revenue over the next two years, and an additional **\$1.49 billion (about 5.7%) decrease** in funds going into the State Transportation Trust Fund over the next five years, which is a primary source of M-CORES funding.
- Because M-CORES funding is channeled through FDOT's five-year work program, if the project proceeds as intended, it will **siphon money away from much-needed transportation** projects from across the state also included in the work program.

For these reasons, 1000 Friends of Florida and the Sierra Club are calling on Gov. DeSantis and the Florida Legislature to take action during the upcoming Special Session or during the 2021 Florida Legislative Session to cease funding Florida M-CORES to allow our state to address much more pressing needs.

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