

1000 Friends of Florida Endorses Renewal
of Brevard County's Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program
Vote Yes for the Half-Cent Sales Tax

The Indian River Lagoon is one of the most biologically diverse estuaries in North America, and one of the most threatened. Decades of pollution from septic tanks, stormwater and wastewater ed algal blooms that wiped out seagrass, starved hundreds of manatees and put at risk the clean water that Brevard's fishing and tourism economy, property values and quality of life depend on.

That's why 1000 Friends of Florida urges Brevard County voters to support a measure on the November ballot that would renew the Save Our Indian River Lagoon half-cent sales tax for another 10 years.

The program is working. Since voters approved it in 2016 with 62% of the vote, Brevard has completed 140 projects, with 92 more underway. Completed projects already keep about 187,000 pounds of nitrogen and 16,700 pounds of phosphorus out of the lagoon every year, and the county has won \$127.3 million in additional outside grants. Seagrass coverage grew 72% from 2023 to 2025, though it remains about half of what it was in the late 2000s.

Unlike the other local measures we are endorsing this year, this one does not buy conservation land. *But it serves the same goal.* The lagoon's problems grew out of decades of growth and development without the sewer and stormwater infrastructure to keep pace.

This past May, the Brevard County Commission voted unanimously to put the renewal on the November ballot. If voters approve the measure:

- The existing half-cent sales tax continues for another 10 years, from Jan. 1, 2027, through Dec. 31, 2036. It is not a new tax.
- The tax is expected to raise about \$800 million over 10 years, and visitors pay more than 20% of it.
- All revenue goes into a trust fund used only for the lagoon: connecting homes from septic to sewer, upgrading septic, wastewater and stormwater systems, removing muck, restoring oysters and living shorelines, and monitoring results.
- A Citizen Oversight Committee, with members from science, finance, tourism, real estate and other fields, meets monthly in public and reviews the plan every year.
- Annual independent audits are required.

A clean, healthy lagoon supports Brevard's fishing, tourism, property values and quality of life. We are proud to stand with residents across the county in supporting this renewal.

We urge residents committed to a healthy lagoon and a prosperous future for Brevard County to vote Yes for the half-cent sales tax.