



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1533

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. **Project/Program Description**

The Indian River Lagoon (IRL) is a large estuarine ecosystem that stretches over 150 miles along the east coast of Florida between Cape Canaveral and Stuart. The IRL has suffered a decline in water quality due to a series of algae blooms caused by decades of increasing anthropogenic activities, such as development, septic system discharges, and land runoff. In 2011, a “super-bloom” formed throughout the IRL causing its seagrasses to suffer a massive die-off. The North Fork St Lucie River (NFSLR) is a freshwater to brackish water river that runs into the Indian River Lagoon. This project aims to restore, maintain, and monitor 20 acres of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), specifically *Vallisneria americana*, to the NFSLR, improving water quality and clarity.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**

**State Agency contacted?**  No

6. **Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	862,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>862,000</b>

7. **Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (including matching funds available for this project)**

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	862,000	80%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	213,000	20%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026</b>	<b>1,075,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?**  No

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. **Is future-year funding likely to be requested?**  Yes

a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**

b. **Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.**



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## Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

### 10. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning    
  Design    
  Construction    
  N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

11. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

### 12. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	Administration, Contracting, and Public Outreach	12,000
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs</b>		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Nursery grown freshwater SAV production, permitting, installation of seagrass, protection of planting units using herbivory exclusion cages, maintenance of herbivory exclusion cages for three years, monthly monitoring for 12 months, and regular progress reporting to provide updates on SAV expansion.	850,000
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>862,000</b>

### 13. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?

The specific goal of this project is to greatly increase fisheries production, natural water filtration, and to provide much needed forage for manatees.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?



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The stated goals will be accomplished by the establishment of self-sustaining meadows of submerged aquatic vegetation. Native submerged aquatic vegetation will be planted, protected, and maintained in the St. Lucie River where it previously flourished.

**c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?**

Submerged aquatic vegetation is critical to fisheries productivity, water filtration, bacteria suppression, and sediment stabilization. The citizens of Florida will benefit from the increase in fisheries, harmful algal bloom reduction, and a reduction of required maintenance dredging.

**d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?**

All citizens of Florida will benefit from tourism revenues derived from healthy estuaries and cleaner water.

**e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?**

The benefits of this project will be accomplished through independent submerged aquatic vegetation expansion monitoring.

**f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for in the contract?**

If a deliverable is not achieved funds would be withheld until the deliverable is met.

**14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster?**

**a. If Yes, what phase best describes the project?**

- Mitigation (reducing or eliminating potential loss of life or property)
- Response (addressing the immediate and short-term effects of a natural disaster)
- Recovery (assisting communities return to normal operations, including rebuilding damaged infrastructure)

**b. Name of the natural disaster (or Executive Order # for events not under a federal declaration):**

**15. Has the entity applied for or received federal assistance for this project?**

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

**a. If yes, provide the FEMA project worksheet ID#:**

**b. Provide the total project cost listed on the FEMA project worksheet:**

**16. Has the entity applied for or received state assistance for this project (other than this request)?**

- Yes, Applied



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- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

**a. If yes, specify the program and state agency (ex. Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan, Department of Commerce):**

Indian River Lagoon Water Quality Improvement Grant

### Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.

**17. Have you been awarded or applied for alternative state funding for this project?**

- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Resilient Florida Grant Program
- Wastewater Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants) ater Quality Improvement Grant
- N/A

**18. What is the population economic status?**

- Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Rural Area of Economic Concern
- Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)
- N/A

**19. What is the status of construction?**

In-Progress

**20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?**

10.7%

**21. What is the estimated completion date of construction?** 6/1/2026

**22. Requester Contact Information**

**a. First Name** Brett **Last Name** Fitzgerald



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**b. Organization**

**c. E-mail Address**

**d. Phone Number**  **Ext.**

#### 23. Recipient Contact Information

**a. Organization**

**b. Municipality and County**

**c. Organization Type**

For Profit Entity

Non Profit 501(c)(3)

Non Profit 501(c)(4)

Local Entity

University or College

Other (please specify)

**d. First Name**  **Last Name**

**e. E-mail Address**

**f. Phone Number**  **Ext.**

#### 24. Lobbyist Contact Information

**a. Name**

**b. Firm Name**

**c. E-mail Address**

**d. Phone Number**

*The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.*