

Charlotte County 2025 State Legislative Session Review

July 22, 2025



CHARLOTTE COUNTY
FLORIDA

Guiding Principles

- **State and Local Governments are partners in the promotion and protection of the health and welfare of the community. To preserve this partnership Charlotte County will:**
 - **Support state policies which benefit the economic development, environmental and social health of Charlotte County and its citizens.**
 - **Oppose legislative changes or fiscal decisions which impact County revenues such as unfunded mandates, revenue limitations, trust fund diversions or cost shifts.**
 - **Support local flexibility to address problems by honoring home rule and avoiding unnecessary preemptions of local authority.**



Appropriations Requests



Appropriations Issues

Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Appropriated
High water Rescue / Dual Purpose Vehicles	\$1,650,000	\$825,000
South Gulf Cove Lock Tender House	\$6,100,000	\$6,100,000
Intersection Hardening / Resiliency	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000
Flood Monitoring & Response Network	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000
Ackerman Septic -to-Sewer Phase 2	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000

Support Requests

Appropriations Support Issues

Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Appropriated
Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority		
2B Pipeline Transmission System	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Surface Water Expansion Project	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000
Charlotte County School Board - Southwest Florida Advanced Manufacturing Training Center	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000

Funding Highlights

\$117.4 billion, after \$567 million in line-item vetoes

- Maintains \$15.7 billion in reserves, reaching maximum legal limit this year with an additional \$429 million contributed
- \$830 million for accelerated debt repayment program
- \$2 billion in tax relief focused on permanently repealing the business rent tax, renewing & expanding several sales tax holidays, and providing additional tax holidays
- K-12 public school system: \$15.9 billion
- Florida Department of Transportation: \$15.1 billion
- VISIT FLORIDA: \$80 million
- State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP): \$163.8 million
- State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL): \$71.2 million
- Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP): \$550 million
- Resilient Florida Grant Program: \$209 million
- State Veteran's Nursing Homes: \$20.8 million

Policy Issues



Budget, Taxation & General Government

- **SB 268 Public Records / Congressional Members & Public Officers**
 - Effective July 1, 2025
 - Exempts from public records specific identifying and location information of certain state and local officials and their families.
 - Defines “Public officers” as a person serving as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Chief Financial Officer, Attorney General, or Commissioner of Agriculture; as well as a state senator or representative, property appraiser, supervisor of elections, school superintendent, city or county commissioner, school board member, or mayor.

Budget, Taxation & General Government

- **HB 703 Utility Relocation**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Communications service providers may apply for reimbursement through the newly created Utility Relocation Reimbursement Grant Program.
- Impacts county revenue by **redirecting \$50 million annually** from the state's Communications Services Tax, which would otherwise be distributed to counties and municipalities through the Local Government Half-Cent Sales Tax Program, to fund the grant program. This diversion is a recurring loss in general revenue for counties.

Budget, Taxation & General Government

- **SB 164 Vessel Accountability**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Amends and creates statutes concerning vessel ownership, nuisance and derelict vessels, and anchoring and mooring practices.
- Expands the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's existing local government grant program to support the derelict vessel prevention and voluntary turn-in program.

Growth Management

- **HB 551 Fire Prevention**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Local governments are required to establish, by October 1, 2025, a simplified permitting process that complies with the minimum requirements of the Building Code's simplified permitting process for fire alarm or sprinkler system projects of 20 or fewer alarm devices or sprinklers.
- a local enforcement agency must issue a permit within 2 business days after submission of the completed application. Contractors may begin work authorized by the permit immediately after the submission of a completed application, before the local enforcement agency issues the permit.

- **HB 683 Construction Regulations**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Requires DEP to adopt standards for the installation of synthetic turf on residential property and prohibits local governments from adopting regulations inconsistent with these standards.
- Requires local governments to approve or deny change orders from their contractors within 35 days.
- Allows private providers to perform "single-trade plans review," an analogous concept to single-trade inspections provided for in current law, authorizing private provider plans review for single construction trades such as plumbing, mechanical, or electrical. Single-trade plans review can be conducted using an automated or software-based system and qualifies for expedited permit processing, from 20 days to 5, for single-family and two-family dwellings.

- **SB 784 Platting**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Local governments are required to review, process, and approve plats or replat submittals without action or approval by the governing body through an administrative authority and official designated by ordinance.

Growth Management

- **SB 1730 Affordable Housing**
 - Effective July 1, 2025
 - Amends various provisions of the Live Local Act
 - Provides an additional authorization for local governments to approve affordable housing on any parcel, including any contiguous parcel connected thereto, that is owned by a religious institution that contains a house of public worship, regardless of the underlying zoning.
 - Expands Live Local Act applicability to portions of any flexibly zoned area, such as a planned unit development permitted for commercial, industrial, or mixed use.
 - Clarifies that the highest currently allowed height, density, and floor area ratio restrictions are as of July 1, 2023

Transportation & Infrastructure

- **HB 987 Transportation Facility Designations**

- Designates the portion of U.S. 41 between Melbourne Street and Church Street in Charlotte County as "Sergeant Elio Diaz Memorial Highway."

- **SB 462 Transportation**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Wakes on streets or highways: A person may not operate a motor vehicle, vessel, or any other conveyance at a speed that creates an excessive wake on a flooded or inundated street or highway.
- Specifies the authority of local governments over electric bicycles, motorized scooters, and micromobility devices to expressly include certain provisions.
- Directs DOT to implement a Next-generation Traffic Signal Modernization Program, to increase traffic signal interconnectivity and provide real-time optimization to improve traffic flow and enhance safety.

Transportation & Infrastructure

- **SB 462 Transportation (cont...)**

- Modifies the legislative intent related to the establishment of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (M.P.O.s) to emphasize:
 - The development of multimodal transportation systems, instead of surface transportation systems; and
 - Serving the mobility needs of people and freight and fostering economic growth and development within and through urbanized areas of this state while balancing conservation of natural resources.
- Updates the criteria M.P.O.s must consider in their long-range transportation plans (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) to include projects that conserve natural resources and reduce traffic and congestion where feasible.
 - Allows public-private partnerships to be included as an innovative financing method for funding projects and programs.
- Mandates DOT to convene similarly sized M.P.O.s annually to share best practices and permits the creation of committees or working groups for this purpose, replacing the previous, more flexible coordination rules.
 - New accountability and transparency measures – requires DOT to establish quality performance metrics such as safety, infrastructure condition, congestion relief, and mobility

Water, Environment, Sustainability

- **HB 209 State Land Management**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Requires that state park lands be managed for “conservation-based public outdoor recreational” use.
 - Expressly excludes sports requiring “sporting facilities” e.g. pickleball, golf, or tennis.
- Requires public hearings for revised land management plans and mandates that management plans for parcels over 160 acres be made publicly available online at least 30 days in advance of hearings.

Water, Environment, Sustainability

- **HB 1313 Resilient Florida Reauthorization**
 - Effective July 1, 2025
 - Reauthorizes the Resilient Florida Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and eliminates the program's scheduled repeal.

Public Health & Safety

- **SB 180 Emergencies**

- Effective upon becoming law
- Prohibits local construction and reconstruction moratoriums, as well as “more burdensome or restrictive” comprehensive plan amendments and land development regulations for counties within a 100-mile radius of the track of a declared hurricane for 1 year.
- Requires FDEM to specify the minimum number of training hours that county administrators, county public works directors, or other officials must complete biennially.
- Requires local governments to coordinate with water management districts and other stormwater management system operators to identify critical infrastructure within their stormwater service area.

Public Health & Safety

- **SB 168 Mental Health**

- Effective October 1, 2025
- Creates new pathways for diverting individuals with mental illness from the criminal justice system into community-based treatment.
- Establishes model pretrial diversion programs for both misdemeanor and felony defendants who meet specified criteria and consent to participate in treatment.
- Authorizes counties to apply for funding through the expanded Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program, which now includes veterans treatment courts and training for 911 dispatchers and EMTs.

- **HB 593 Dangerous Dogs**

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Requires dog owners who are aware of a dog's dangerous behavior to securely confine the animal as if it had been formally classified as dangerous.
- Mandates animal control authorities to confiscate and hold dogs under investigation for causing a fatality or leaving a bite ranked as Level 5 or higher on the Dunbar Dog Bite Scale.

Failed Legislation

- **HB 301 / SB 1570 Suits Against the Government**
 - Significantly increased the statutory limits on liability for tort claims against the state and its political subdivisions.
- **HJR 679 / SJR 802 Term Limits for County Commissioners**
 - Stripped local ability to self-govern by requiring statewide ballot initiative for 8-year term limits
- **HB 1221 / SB 1664 Local Option Taxes**
 - Undermined prior voter approval by referendum, and affected discretionary sales surtaxes, tourist development taxes (TDT), and local option food and beverage taxes.
 - House PCS dissolved existing Tourist Development Councils and directed that, beginning in 2026, TDT revenues be used to offset property tax rates.

Failed Legislation

- **SB 432 Power of County Commissioners to Levy Special Assessments**
 - Amended existing statutes to remove the ability of county commissioners to levy special assessments for funding municipal facilities and services.
- **HB 501 Hands Free Driving**
 - Revised the "Florida Hands-Free Driving Law" to prohibit the use of wireless communication devices in a handheld manner while driving.
- **HB 1169/ SB 7002 Water Management Districts**
 - Allowed districts to levy additional ad valorem taxes for capital improvement projects, subject to approval by a majority of electors through referendum, with defined limits and project reporting requirements.
- **HB 991 Community and Economic Development**
 - Terminated certain community redevelopment agencies by July 1, 2025, with limitations on new projects, exceptions for outstanding bonds, and a prohibition on future creation and expansion.

What's Next?

- Property Tax
 - House Select Committee on Property Taxes
- 2026 State Legislative Session
 - Policy Issues
 - Clarification on SB 180 “more burdensome or restrictive regulations”
 - Public records exemption for personal identifying information for County Administrators
 - Allowing senior staff to participate in executive sessions as subject matter experts
 - Amend the definition of “annexation” to incorporate the inclusion of abutting rights-of-way and road and drainage easements of record

What's Next?

- 2026 State Legislative Session
 - Appropriations
 - Ackerman septic to sewer
 - Intersection hardening & resiliency
 - Sheriff's warehouse
 - Fire training tower
 - Grant funding

