

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(13)

TO: Honorable Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert, III
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: April 4, 2023

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution urging the United States Congress and the Florida Legislature to appropriate funds for seaweed removal on beaches located in Miami-Dade County, to study the cause of the increase in sargassum seaweed and any possible solutions to minimize its impact, and to explore actions for the removal of seaweed from the ocean

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Eileen Higgins.


Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/uw

MDC001



MEMORANDUM
(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert, III
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

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Please note any items checked.

- "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Statement of social equity required
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- No committee review
- Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, or CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c)(2) ____) to approve
- Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(13)
4-4-23

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR SEAWEED REMOVAL ON BEACHES LOCATED IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, TO STUDY THE CAUSE OF THE INCREASE IN SARGASSUM SEAWEED AND ANY POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO MINIMIZE ITS IMPACT, AND TO EXPLORE ACTIONS FOR THE REMOVAL OF SEAWEED FROM THE OCEAN

WHEREAS, tourism is Miami-Dade County’s largest industry; and

WHEREAS, according to a study and report by the World Travel and Tourism Council and Oxford Economics, travel and tourism contributed \$11,100,000,000.00 to Miami-Dade County’s economy in 2022, making it the fourth-largest tourism market in the United States; and

WHEREAS, according to the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, the taxes generated by tourism save each Florida household as much as \$1,744.00 in additional taxes to maintain current levels of government services; and

WHEREAS, the beaches in Miami-Dade County are the centerpiece of the County’s tourist attractions; and

WHEREAS, sargassum seaweed, a type of floating algae, has invaded some County beaches, including the popular tourist destinations on Miami Beach; and

WHEREAS, the presence of sargassum seaweed on County beaches has dramatically increased in recent years; and

WHEREAS, a mass of sargassum seaweed, spanning more than 5,000 miles, is currently floating toward the shores of Florida and other coastlines throughout the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, when sargassum seaweed accumulates on the beach, it emits a hazardous gas that may cause respiratory problems and an unpleasant odor; and

WHEREAS, the presence of sargassum seaweed can have a deleterious effect on the tourism industry and impede visitors' and residents' enjoyment of the natural beauty of our beaches; and

WHEREAS, damage to the tourism industries of Miami-Dade County and of other regions along the Gulf Coast and the Atlantic Ocean could have severely negative economic impacts; and

WHEREAS, the County's Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department ("PROS") is responsible for maintaining 17 miles of County beaches; and

WHEREAS, PROS works collaboratively with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to follow all regulations and obtain required permits for beach cleaning; and

WHEREAS, PROS spent approximately \$3,400,000.00 in seaweed removal costs in Fiscal Year 2021-2022; and

WHEREAS, scientific experts believe that the increase in sargassum seaweed may be caused by rising global water temperatures and increased amounts of fertilizers present in the ocean, and additional research is needed to determine the cause; and

WHEREAS, it would benefit not only the County, but all coastal communities along the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean to understand the causes of the increase in sargassum seaweed along with any potential solutions,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board:

Section 1. Urges the United States Congress and the Florida Legislature to appropriate funds for seaweed removal on beaches located in Miami-Dade County.

Section 2. Urges the United States Congress and the Florida Legislature to study the cause of the increase in sargassum seaweed, the origin of the annual blooms, the geochemical composition, and to explore any possible solutions to the increase in sargassum seaweed.

Section 3. Urges the United State Congress and the Florida Legislature to explore actions to remove the seaweed from the ocean before it reaches the Miami-Dade County shoreline.

Section 4. Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Members of the Florida Congressional Delegation, the Florida Senate President, the Florida House Speaker, and the Chair and the Members of the Miami-Dade County State Legislative Delegation.

Section 5. Directs the County's federal and state lobbyists to advocate for the actions set forth in sections 1, 2, and 3 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to amend the 2023 Federal Legislative Package and 2023 State Legislative Package to include this item.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Eileen Higgins. It was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Chairman
Anthony Rodríguez, Vice Chairman
Marleine Bastien
Kevin Marino Cabrera
Roberto J. Gonzalez
Danielle Cohen Higgins
Kionne L. McGhee
Micky Steinberg
Juan Carlos Bermudez
Sen. René García
Keon Hardemon
Eileen Higgins
Raquel A. Regalado

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 4th day of April, 2023. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

LUIS G. MONTALDO, CLERK AD INTERIM

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.



Cristina M. Rabionet