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CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

# MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(4)

**TO:** Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** September 20, 2016

**FROM:** Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Resolution urging the Florida Legislature to enact legislation banning the sale of Argentine black and white tegus in Florida; urging the Florida Legislature and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to undertake additional measures to contain the spread of these lizards in the Everglades and South Florida

Resolution No. R-850-16

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

Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

APW/cp

# MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

**TO:** Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** September 20, 2016

**FROM:** Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item No. 11(A)(4)

**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 ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous _____) 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)(4)
9-20-16

RESOLUTION NO. R-850-16

RESOLUTION URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO ENACT LEGISLATION BANNING THE SALE OF ARGENTINE BLACK AND WHITE TEGUS IN FLORIDA; URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE AND THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO UNDERTAKE ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF THESE LIZARDS IN THE EVERGLADES AND SOUTH FLORIDA

**WHEREAS**, as part of an increasingly popular international pet trade market, many exotic animals have been removed from their native habitats and placed in areas where they may disrupt the surrounding ecological environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the most recent of these invasive species to affect Florida is the Argentine black and white tegu, a large omnivorous species of lizard native to South America which was first spotted in the wild near a Florida City trailer park in 2008; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2009, when biologists first began trapping the lizards in South Florida, they captured just 13 tegus, whereas in 2014 they caught 410 tegus, and in 2015 they captured almost 650; and

**WHEREAS**, such a rapid rise has many wildlife biologists concerned that the Argentine black and white tegu may become the next Burmese python, a large invasive species of snake which in recent years has established a sizeable and virtually uncontainable breeding population in the Everglades National Park, disrupting the delicate balance of the park's food chain; and

**WHEREAS**, unlike Burmese pythons, however, Argentine black and white tegus can survive in colder weather than South Florida's tropical climate, making them capable of extending their territory to more temperate regions; and

**WHEREAS**, in fact, in the last several years Argentine black and white tegus have spread into the Florida Everglades, west to Collier County and then north to Hillsborough County; and

**WHEREAS**, the same conditions that allow the vast diversity of wildlife to thrive in the Everglades also enable the survival of invasive exotic species such as the Argentine black and white tegu that can disrupt the delicate balance of the Everglades' unique ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, these invaders can harm native species, some of which are threatened and endangered, and add economic burdens to private landowners and public land managers; and

**WHEREAS**, indeed, a growing and spreading tegu population is a threat to native wildlife such as crocodiles, sea turtles, ground-nesting birds, and small mammals; and

**WHEREAS**, Argentine black and white tegus are still readily available in pet stores, and trapping and selling them is still legal in Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, this Board would like to urge the Florida Legislature to ban the sale of Argentine black and white tegus in Florida, and would also like to urge the Florida Legislature and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to undertake additional measures to contain the rapid spread of these lizards in the Everglades and South Florida,

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

**Section 1.** Urges the Florida Legislature to enact legislation banning the sale of Argentine black and white tegus in Florida.

**Section 2.** Urges the Florida Legislature and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to undertake additional measures to contain the rapid spread of Argentine black and white tegus in the Everglades and South Florida.

**Section 3.** Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, the Chair and Members of the Miami-Dade State Legislative Delegation, and the Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

**Section 4.** Directs the County's state lobbyists to advocate for the legislation set forth in Section 1 above and for the action set forth in Section 2 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to include this item in the 2017 State Legislative Package when it is presented to the Board.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Rebeca Sosa. It was offered by Commissioner **Rebeca Sosa**, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Daniella Levine Cava** and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jean Monestime, Chairman | **aye** | | |
| Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Vice Chairman | **aye** | | |
| Bruno A. Barreiro | **aye** | Daniella Levine Cava | **aye** |
| Jose "Pepe" Diaz | **aye** | Audrey M. Edmonson | **aye** |
| Sally A. Heyman | **aye** | Barbara J. Jordan | **aye** |
| Dennis C. Moss | **aye** | Rebeca Sosa | **aye** |
| Sen. Javier D. Souto | **aye** | Xavier L. Suarez | **aye** |
| Juan C. Zapata | **absent** | | |

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 20th day of September, 2016. 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

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: Christopher Agrippa
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency. MJM

Michael J. Mastrucci