

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(7)

TO: Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: March 15, 2022

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution urging the Florida
Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Commission and the South
Florida Water Management
District to explore and undertake
additional measures to contain
the spread of Argentine black
and white tegus throughout the
state

Resolution No. R-273-22

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



Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/jp



MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

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County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 11(A)(7)

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)(7)
3-15-22

RESOLUTION NO. _____ R-273-22

RESOLUTION URGING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND THE SOUTH FLORIDA
WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TO EXPLORE AND
UNDERTAKE ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO CONTAIN THE
SPREAD OF ARGENTINE BLACK AND WHITE TEGUS
THROUGHOUT THE STATE

WHEREAS, the Argentine black and white tegu (*Salvator merianae*), commonly referred to as a tegu, is a large omnivorous species of lizard native to South America that can grow up to four feet in length; and

WHEREAS, the tegu was first introduced to Florida through the international pet trade market, and has since become an invasive species posing an increasingly significant threat to Florida's native wildlife and ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, tegus have known established breeding populations in Miami-Dade County, Hillsborough County, and Charlotte County, and are continuing to expand their range throughout South Florida and other parts of the state; and

WHEREAS, adult tegus have few predators and can reproduce large numbers of offspring per year; and

WHEREAS, the growing and spreading tegu population is a threat to native wildlife and has the potential to reduce the populations of threatened and endangered native species; and

WHEREAS, for example, tegus disturb and prey upon the nests of other native species, and are especially known for eating the eggs of alligators, crocodiles, sea turtles, ground-nesting birds, and even threatened gopher tortoises; and

WHEREAS, tegus have also been documented eating gopher tortoise hatchlings, among various other animals; and

WHEREAS, to address the ongoing threat posed by tegus to Florida's ecology, this Board has previously urged the Florida Legislature and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission ("FWC") in relation to tegus on three separate occasions, as evidenced by Resolution Nos. R-147-16, R-850-16, and R-222-20; and

WHEREAS, during the 2020 Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 2020-123, Laws of Florida (Senate Bill 1414), which, among other things, banned the sale of tegus within the state by designating tegus as a conditional nonnative species generally prohibited from being kept, possessed, imported into the state, sold, bartered, traded, or bred, except for educational, research, or eradication or control purposes; and

WHEREAS, on February 25, 2021, the FWC approved new rules regarding tegus which, among other things, specifically prohibited any new ownership of tegus as personal pets as of April 29, 2021, and required individuals who already owned a tegu as a personal pet prior to April 29, 2021, to obtain and maintain a special permit for the life of the animal and to have the animal marked with a microchip; and

WHEREAS, despite these measures, tegus remain widespread throughout the state and thus a continuing threat to the state's native wildlife and ecosystems, largely due to released and escaped pets and unscrupulous dealers; and

WHEREAS, currently, wildlife experts and scientists in Florida are working with various governmental agencies, including the FWC and the South Florida Water Management District ("SFWMD"), as part of cooperative programs designed to locate, survey, monitor, and trap tegus where they have spread and established populations; and

WHEREAS, although these efforts have shown some success in combatting the spread of tegus, researchers have nonetheless recently expressed the need for additional resources to address the tegu problem on a larger scale; and

WHEREAS, accordingly, this Board would like to urge the FWC and the SFWMD to explore and undertake additional measures to contain the spread of tegus throughout the state,

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

Section 1. Urges the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the South Florida Water Management District to explore and undertake additional measures to contain the spread of Argentine black and white tegus throughout the state.

Section 2. Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit certified copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Chair and Members of the Miami-Dade State Legislative Delegation, the Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the Executive Director and Governing Board Members of the South Florida Water Management District.

Section 3. Directs the County's state lobbyists to advocate for the action set forth in section 1 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to amend the 2022 State Legislative Package to include this item.

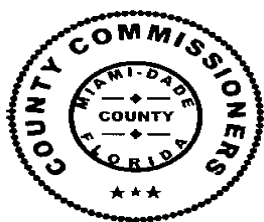
The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Rebeca Sosa. It was offered by Commissioner **Rebeca Sosa**, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Sally A. Heyman** and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Chairman	aye		
Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Vice-Chairman	aye		
Sen. René García	aye	Keon Hardemon	aye
Sally A. Heyman	aye	Danielle Cohen Higgins	aye
Eileen Higgins	aye	Joe A. Martinez	aye
Kionne L. McGhee	aye	Jean Monestime	aye
Raquel A. Regalado	aye	Rebeca Sosa	aye
Sen. Javier D. Souto	aye		

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 15th day of March, 2022. 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: Basia Pruna
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

KMB

Keoki M. Baron