

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(11)

TO: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: September 3, 2025

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution urging the Florida Legislature to appropriate funding for the Florida Rail Enterprise Program to fund the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority's Tri-Rail Operations to maintain Tri-Rail's level of service; urging the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to include such funding, as it may be necessary, in the appropriate current and future FDOT five-year work programs

Resolution No. R-885-25

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/gh



MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: September 3, 2025

FROM: 
Gen Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

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

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 ____, majority plus one ____, 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) ____, 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)(11)
9-3-25

RESOLUTION NO. R-885-25

RESOLUTION URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR THE FLORIDA RAIL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM TO FUND THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY'S TRI-RAIL OPERATIONS TO MAINTAIN TRI-RAIL'S LEVEL OF SERVICE; URGING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) TO INCLUDE SUCH FUNDING, AS IT MAY BE NECESSARY, IN THE APPROPRIATE CURRENT AND FUTURE FDOT FIVE-YEAR WORK PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, safe, efficient, and connected public transportation is a cornerstone of a successful metropolitan region, supporting economic growth, sustainability, and a high quality of life for residents; and

WHEREAS, South Florida has made progress toward becoming a competitive global metro area, with planned investments in regional mobility playing a key role in that transformation; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida region continues to grow in population, increasing the need for improved rail transit options; and

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2025, Governor DeSantis signed HB 7031 into law, approving a \$1.3 billion tax package that includes significant changes impacting state and local funding for transit; and

WHEREAS, HB 7031 includes a provision that revises the distribution from documentary stamp tax revenues to eliminate the Florida Rail Enterprise programs; and

WHEREAS, the elimination of the funding distribution for the Florida Rail Enterprise program has a significant negative financial impact on the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority's (SFRTA) operation of the commuter rail service known as Tri-Rail; and

WHEREAS, Tri-Rail operates along 72 miles of the South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC) and eight miles of the Florida East Coast Railway (FECR) in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties; and

WHEREAS, Tri-Rail achieved an all-time ridership record in Fiscal Year 2024-2025, carrying over 4.5 million passengers, demonstrating strong demand and the critical role of commuter rail in South Florida's transportation network; and

WHEREAS, despite this unprecedented ridership, Tri-Rail faces significant financial challenges due to recent reductions in state operational funding, which threaten the long-term stability and continuity of the service; and

WHEREAS, these changes create funding uncertainties for the SFRTA, which may affect its ability to engage in long-term planning and contractual commitments necessary to support reliable commuter rail service; and

WHEREAS, this threatens the availability and reliability of a vital regional transit option, likely forcing thousands of commuters to shift to personal vehicles, which could significantly increase traffic congestion on Interstate 95 (I-95) and the Florida Turnpike, and exacerbate commute delays; and

WHEREAS, this shift in funding approach could also create challenges in identifying a sustainable long-term funding solution that meets the financial and operational needs of SFRTA's regional rail network; and

WHEREAS, changes to state funding structures may also have secondary impacts on related transit initiatives where coordination is required around shared assets such as rolling stock, infrastructure, and service planning; and

WHEREAS, without sustained and predictable investment, it may become more difficult for SFRTA to maintain current service levels, pursue future improvements, or meet certain federal program requirements, which could affect the broader stability of the regional transit system; and

WHEREAS, SFRTA plays a critical role in serving the public by providing a safe, affordable, and accessible regional transportation option that thousands of residents, workers, and visitors rely on each day to commute across Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties; and

WHEREAS, Tri-Rail has utilized reserves and implemented operational efficiencies, including lowering administrative costs below state averages, but these measures are insufficient to close an existing \$30 million budget deficit, emphasizing the need for dedicated, sustainable funding sources; and

WHEREAS, the state's recent actions walk back a commitment made in prior years to invest in regional mobility solutions; and

WHEREAS, SFRTA has engaged in long-term efforts and multiple studies with state and local partners for nearly two decades to secure a stable funding mechanism, underscoring the urgency of legislative and fiscal action to preserve and grow this vital regional transit service; and

WHEREAS, these changes shift the burden of funding major infrastructure to local governments, many of which are already facing significant fiscal constraints; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires that the state provide critically needed assistance for this essential transit service,

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 appropriate funding for the Florida Rail Enterprise Program to fund South Florida Regional Transportation Authority's Tri-Rail operations to maintain Tri-Rail's level of service, and further urges the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to include such funding, as it may be necessary, in the appropriate current and future FDOT Five-Year Work Programs.

Section 2. Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, the Senate President, the House Speaker, the Chair and remaining Members of the Miami-Dade State Legislative Delegation, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, the District Six Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, and the Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization.

Section 3. Directs the County's state lobbyists to advocate for the action described in Section 1 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to include this item in the 2026 State Legislative Package when it is presented to the Board.

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

Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman	aye		
Kionne L. McGhee, Vice Chairman	aye		
Marleine Bastien	aye	Juan Carlos Bermudez	absent
Sen. René García	absent	Oliver G. Gilbert, III	aye
Roberto J. Gonzalez	aye	Keon Hardemon	aye
Danielle Cohen Higgins	aye	Eileen Higgins	aye
Natalie Milian Orbis	aye	Raquel A. Regalado	aye
Micky Steinberg	aye		

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 3rd day of September, 2025. 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

JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN, CLERK

By: Basia Pruna
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

Annery Pulgar Alfonso
Christian J. Fernandez-Andes