



December 2, 2014

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CECW-CE, Lisa Kiefel
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000
Lisa.d.kiefel@usace.army.mil

RE: Proposals from Non-Federal Interests for Proposed Feasibility Studies and Proposed Modifications to Authorized Water Resources Development Projects or Feasibility Studies for Inclusion in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Annual Report

Dear Ms. Kiefel,

Charlotte County, Florida appreciates the opportunity to submit the following proposal to modify an existing authorization to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for consideration as per the Federal Register notice of August 5, 2014.

1. Provide the name of all non-Federal interests planning to act as the sponsor, including any non-Federal interest that has contributed or is expected to contribute toward the non-Federal share of the proposed feasibility study or modification.

Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners

2. State if this proposal is for a feasibility study or a modification to an authorized USACE project or feasibility study and, if a modification, specify the authorized project or study.

This proposal suggests a modification to an existing authority contained in Section 5158 of P.L. 110-114, also known as the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. Specifically, a portion of the aforementioned section includes the following:

(121) CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA.—\$3,000,000 for water supply infrastructure, Charlotte County, Florida.

We propose a modification of the authorization to the following:

(121) CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA.—\$16,000,000 for waste water infrastructure, Charlotte County, Florida.

3. State the project purpose of the proposed study or modification.

Charlotte County proposes to amend its Corps of Engineers authority to address the Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Charlotte Harbor project which is a large-scale initiative

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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that transitions onsite sewage treatment & disposal systems throughout the County (OSTDS) to central sewer systems and also implements significant stormwater system improvements. The project will substantially restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast ecosystem. Specifically, the project will improve the health of the Charlotte Harbor estuary, the second largest in Florida, which ultimately will improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico. Water quality improvements will provide important benefits for the wildlife of the Gulf such as shellfish, sea turtles, and other marine life. The project includes removal of OSTDS and constructing a central sewer system and stormwater improvements, and an educational program on Best Management Practices. These efforts will reduce the non-point source pollutant load and mitigate the resulting ecological impacts that are currently impairing the receiving water bodies of Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico.

4. Provide an estimate, to the extent practicable, of the total cost of the proposed study or modification.

Charlotte County began developing the Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Charlotte Harbor project in 2009 with the prioritization of areas within Charlotte County that were not on central wastewater disposal. Prioritization was based on the following criteria: proximity to impaired water bodies, OSTDS failures, population density, frequency of beach closures due to bacteria, proximity of existing central wastewater disposal infrastructure and projected road paving projects. Four areas were identified with a total construction cost upwards of \$400 million by project completion. This initial request for \$16,000,000 will eliminate approximately 2,600 existing OSTDS that are negatively affecting water quality to the receiving waters of Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico. To complete the entire program, an additional \$16,000,000 would be required each subsequent year over a 7 year period in order to eliminate the pollution caused by the remaining 18,200 OSTDS. Therefore, the total multi-year funding request is for \$128,000,000.

5. Describe, to the extent practicable, the anticipated monetary and non-monetary benefits of the proposal including benefits to the protection of human life and property; improvement to transportation; the national economy; the environment; or the national security interests of the United States.

Charlotte County is laying the foundation upon which habitat restoration and the replenishment of living coastal and marine resources can occur and be effective. With pollutants still entering the water bodies, nutrient and bacteria loads will continue to degrade the water quality needed to revitalize and sustain the Gulf economy. According to the results shown by an EPA approved watershed model for a pilot septic replacement and stormwater improvement project in the North Shore area of Charlotte Harbor, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and organics are anticipated to be reduced on average by 87% upon project completion. As a result of the project, bacteria levels are also anticipated to decrease. The entire multi-phased project will eliminate over 18,200 OSTDS and improve the functioning of stormwater swales throughout the prioritized areas. The project also provides economic benefits through jobs created during implementation and raises land value due to the availability of central water and sewer. Reducing pollutants entering the water bodies also translates into less beach closures thereby enhancing the quality of life for residents and tourists to the area's shorelines. It is anticipated that the economic benefit resulting from improving water quality in Charlotte Harbor through these types of improvements is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The project promotes stewardship of the environment through education on potential pollutants as a result of household cleaning and landscaping, and demonstrates how alternatives such as rain gardens, organic fertilizing and other "Florida Friendly" practices can help restore and sustain the natural resources for future generations.

6. Describe if local support exists for the proposal.

The Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Charlotte Harbor project is in alignment with existing local, regional, and non-profit cooperating partner goals and objectives. More specifically, the project addresses goals and objectives outlined in the County's Comprehensive Plan and in Priority Actions that are outlined in the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), the Joint Florida Gulf National Estuary Programs Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan, and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan. The project is also supported locally through assessments to property owners for improvements.

7. State if the non-Federal interest has the financial ability to provide for the required cost share.

Charlotte County plans to provide the required cost share through assessments, low interest loans, in-kind contributions, and grants. Through an extensive process, Charlotte County has determined the affordability level for providing central wastewater service to each property owner through assessments is \$10,000 per property. As costs continue to increase, Charlotte County is seeking ways to meet this affordability level for each property. While low interest loans provide some support, additional grant funding is required in order to proceed with the project. In-kind contributions consist of the use of in-house staff time and resources to alleviate project costs related to engineering, design, and construction inspection, monitoring, and program administration/supervision. Charlotte County has been assessing homeowners a larger pilot area of 2,455 properties called East & West Spring Lakes for the past two years and will begin transitioning the OSTDS of the 1,844 properties in the area to central sewer in 2015. The design plans and permitting are complete. Bids for this project are due in December 2014 and the project is to be awarded in January 2015 with construction to begin in March 2015.

8. Submit a letter or statement of support from each associated non-Federal interest.

Please accept this letter as our statement of support from Charlotte County. Thank you for your consideration of our request. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kelly Shoemaker at 941.743.1944 or kelly.shoemaker@charlottecountyfl.gov.

Sincerely,



William G. Truex, Chairman
Charlotte County Board of
County Commissioners

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