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## Protecting Local Decision-Making Top Priority for Florida League of Cities

*Florida League of Cities Announces Action Agenda for the 2019 Legislative Session*

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During the 58<sup>th</sup> annual legislative conference in Orlando last week, members of the Florida League of Cities adopted legislative priorities for the 2019 legislative session.

Hundreds of city officials gathered to develop a streamlined agenda. Protecting Florida's neighborhoods through vacation rental zoning – along with a push for significant funding for water supply and quality – were among five key issues.

“Our city officials are eager to work with state legislators to protect the quality of life in our communities,” said Bartow Mayor and Florida League of Cities President Leo E. Longworth. “Through our united advocacy platform, we are ready to meet with stakeholders, build consensus and ensure that local issues are solved through local decisions.”

Other priorities include a focus on community redevelopment agencies, reforming the communications services tax and advocating for transportation improvements through increased funding.

“The engagement of city officials in the League's legislative process is essential to our advocacy success,” said Town of Bay Harbor Islands Councilman and Florida League of Cities First Vice President Isaac Salver. Salver, who also chairs the League's Legislative Committee, continued, “After careful consideration based on the feedback from members across the state, the League and its policy committees have once again crafted a strong legislative agenda to serve the needs of Florida's cities and promote local self-government.”

The 2019 Legislative Action Agenda outlines the League's position on the following priority issues:

- **Community Redevelopment Agencies** – The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation to protect and improve municipalities' use of community redevelopment agencies to effectively carry out redevelopment and community revitalization in accordance with Home Rule.
- **Communication Services Tax Protection** – The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation to reform the Communications Services Tax in a manner that is revenue neutral; provides for a broad and equitable tax base; provides for enhanced stability and reliability as an important

revenue source for local government; and provides a uniform method for taxing communication services in Florida. Reform should promote a competitively neutral tax policy that will free consumers to choose a provider based on tax-neutral considerations.

- **Short-Term Vacation Rentals** – The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation that restores local zoning authority with respect to short-term rental properties thereby preserving the integrity of Florida’s residential neighborhoods and communities. The Florida League of Cities OPPOSES legislation that preempts municipal authority as it relates to the regulation of short-term rental properties.
- **Transportation Funding** – The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation that preserves local control of transportation planning. The legislation should create an equitable transportation funding formula between the state, municipalities, and counties, while providing for additional transportation revenue to support innovative infrastructure and transit projects to meet the surging transportation demands driven by dramatic growth throughout Florida.
- **Water Supply & Quality** – The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation to address the state’s critical water resource and water quality deficiencies to mitigate the negative economic impact of these issues through priority corrective actions and funding.

Here’s what leaders around the state are saying about the Florida League of Cities 2019 Legislative Action Agenda:

**Bill Partington, Mayor, City of Ormond Beach**  
***FLC Finance, Taxation & Personnel Committee Chair***

“We cities rely upon the general revenues collected from our communication services and local business taxes. They’re a key component of our cities’ annual budgets, and they help us provide the municipal services that are essential to our residents’ quality of life. The League and its members know how critically important these funds are to all of us, and they support protection of these taxes and their revenues.”

**Kathy Meehan, Mayor, City of Melbourne**  
***FLC Land Use & Economic Development Committee Chair***

“Improving the quality of life for our residents is always a top priority for us who are local officials. In recent years, our municipalities have been defending many threats to our quality of life, including attacks on community redevelopment agencies, also known as CRAs. CRAs can dramatically help improve the economic and social conditions of our blighted areas. CRAs are a perfect example of solving local problems with our local solutions. The League and its members support the continuation of CRAs as a vital redevelopment tool and further support transparency and improving all aspects of the processes CRAs use to deliver programs.”

**Cal Rolfson, Councilmember, City of Mount Dora**  
***FLC Municipal Administration Committee Chair***

“Short-term vacation rentals are a growing concern for virtually all of our municipalities in Florida, yet our local governments are preempted by state politicians from having any authority on the issue. A one-size-fits-all set of standards will not solve the problems that so many of our communities are facing with this issue. The League believes – and we members agree – that local authority on short-term rentals must be restored if we’re going to preserve the integrity of our local neighborhoods and communities.”

**Hazelle Rogers, Mayor, City of Lauderdale Lakes**  
***FLC Transportation & Intergovernmental Relations***

“As Florida’s population continues to grow and our infrastructure age, our cities need to keep up with the ever-increasing transportation challenges. Cities, Counties, State and Federal governments must work together to resolve this issue. Innovation, and a dedicated recurring funding source for capital and maintenance is necessary to address this issue. To address our issue, the League supports an increase in funding for our local and regional projects to help update, expand and enhance all forms of transportation for Floridians those who visit our state and ultimately benefit our economy.”

**Helen Miller, Councilmember, Town of White Springs**  
***FLC Utilities, Natural Resources & Public Works Committee Chair***

“In a state as geographically diverse as Florida, our cities face water issues on many fronts. Virtually all of our municipalities in Florida currently face or will face issues of water quality and quantity. The League and its members support legislation that addresses our water quality, water conservation, water infrastructure deficits, spring and lagoon protection, and mitigation strategies for sea level encroachment.”

The regular Legislative Session in Florida begins on March 5, 2019. The Florida League of Cities opposes unfunded mandates from any level of government and will continue to advocate for legislation that ensures local city leaders are not held accountable for decisions made by others who live far away and are do not feel the fiscal impact on local taxpayers.

Visit [bit.ly/2qOW60T](http://bit.ly/2qOW60T) to download a complete copy of the Florida League of Cities 2019 Legislative Action Agenda.

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*Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments. Its goals are to promote local self-government and serve the needs of Florida’s cities. Florida’s cities are formed by their citizens and governed by their citizens. The League is founded on the belief that local self-government is the keystone of American democracy. For more information, visit [floridaleagueofcities.com](http://floridaleagueofcities.com).*