

Good morning. My name is Tom Singleton. I am here today representing the City of Winter Haven, along with Mike Britt from the City.

We would like to acknowledge the difficulty of the problems you are trying to solve and thank the three water managements for the technical contributions you are making as a team. Your work is unprecedented.

We have a paper we would like to share with you today offering six recommendations to the Initiative. They draw upon lessons learned in 40 years of water management in the state and the work the City is doing to protect its lakes and water resources.

In the brief time permitted today, I would like to speak to two of the recommendations. The first is the need for the CFWI to address existing impacts through hydrologic restoration projects and water reservations. These actions will protect existing water uses and prevent impacts from future water demands. Unless this is done, the water that communities and natural resources depend upon today will literally be pulled out from under them to meet the water needs of other communities. This has already happened in Winter Haven and along the Lake Wales Ridge, where lake levels and water quality have been impacted by regional declines in aquifer levels.

The second recommendation is for the CFWI to actively engage local governments as full partners in the Initiative, not just permittees. This is important, as local governments have the tools and ability to link land use and water resource management, along with intimate knowledge of their communities, both of which the water management districts do not have. They also have the ability to develop incentives and market-based solutions to problems for engaging stakeholders and the free market as full partners in the process. This is important, as the effects of regional water management decisions are felt first and most profoundly by local communities who are ultimately accountable for the decisions and their impacts to local economies and community quality of life. In Winter Haven, this means bearing the cost of restoring native hydrology to restore lake levels and water quality in 25 of its 50 lakes. As you will read in the recommendations, this is one of several impacts addressed by the City's regional water infrastructure improvement and ecosystem restoration project, known as the "Sapphire Necklace."

You have an enormous challenge before you and we want to acknowledge the importance and timeliness of your work. The City would like to assist you as a partner and we respectfully request the opportunity to formally present our recommendations to you at your August meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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