



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1714

1. Project Title Tampa Bay Watch Shoreline Protection and Water Quality Improvements

2. Senate Sponsor Ed Hooper

3. Date of Request 10/23/2025

#### 4. Project/Program Description

Tampa Bay Watch's principle mission for over 32 years has been the restoration and preservation of shorelines and improving water quality in and around greater Tampa Bay. Damages to coastal shorelines in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties caused by hurricanes in 2024 further demonstrate a need to proactively protect the coast from surge and rising sea levels. Tampa Bay Watch has proven highly effective in mobilizing the local community to participate in habitat restoration projects, including Living Shorelines, that preserve and protect the coast. Our initiatives simultaneously create habitat for the eastern oyster, which provide a nature-based solution by filtering and improving waters that are both cost-effective and timely.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Department of Environmental Protection

State Agency contacted? No

#### 6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	750,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>750,000</b>

#### 7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	750,000	100%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

8. Has this project previously received state funding? Yes

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2025-26	0	0	3508	No

9. Is future-year funding likely to be requested? Yes

a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year. 750,000

b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

The funding streams that will be used for ongoing operations include donations from supporters.



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LFIR # 1714

## Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

### 10. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

☐ Planning ☐ Design ☐ Construction ☐ N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

10/01/2026

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

9/30/2028

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

11. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

### 12. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs</b>		
Salary and Benefits	restoration specialist, project manager, oyster reef ball coordinator, GIS coordinator, OSRP coordinator, OSRP specialist, shell program manager, native plant program coordinator, restoration lead scientist	308,937
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	travel to restoration site, equipment rental, software, production concrete, shell, project shell for artificial reef, nursery harvest supplies, plants, fuel	161,063
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	engineer, fabrication and field installation	280,000
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>750,000</b>

### 13. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?



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Sea rise imposes an existential threat to low-lying coastal communities like Tampa Bay. Living shoreline solutions provide a value-driven and nature-based approach toward long-term resiliency building that preserves the increasingly delicate balance between natural and human systems. These projects will address ecosystem concerns, including the stabilization of the shoreline that helps protect local residents and species. Methods used (including community participation in implementation) will help to reduce shoreline erosion and provide optimal conditions for the settlement of coastal marshes and mangroves; provide food sources and foraging areas for a variety of important species; increase the surface area in the intertidal zone for attaching organisms, primarily oysters, which in turn increases productivity and provide a natural cleansing system for the bay and promote water quality improvements in the Tampa Bay estuary.

**b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?**

Tampa Bay Watch will engage the community to create living shoreline projects throughout the bay, including oyster reefs, sea grass support and marsh grass plantings. Additionally, TBW will expand an already successful oyster shell recycling program, working with local restaurants to collect the shells before being discarded that can be used in our living shoreline creation projects that reduce land-fill and accelerate oyster volume, resulting in better water filtration.

**c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?**

These projects generally have multiple goals and objectives including the creation and restoration of aquatic habitat, creation of foraging area and food sources for local wildlife, filtering nutrients, improving water quality, stabilizing sediments to reduce erosion and engagement of the community in environmental stewardship and hands-on restoration efforts.

**d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?**

The target population by the project is the entire Tampa Bay community. Indirectly, all of the residents of Tampa Bay area will benefit from the better shoreline protection and recovery, as well as increases in estuarine habitat and water quality improvements provided by the projects completed.

**e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?**

The efforts of Tampa Bay Watch to restore and protect the bay's habitat through stewardship provide effective long-term improvements to the bay and empower our community to counteract local environmental problems. Desired outcomes of successful living shorelines projects include: reduced coastal erosion, wildlife habitat creation, reduced flooding, improved water quality, and in some cases, recovered shoreline. In addition, a healthy Bay provides increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and supports regional tourism and commerce. This program also allows us to gain invaluable information about the long-term trends of living shoreline projects. This will be measured by the number of living shoreline projects being implemented, the number of community volunteers involved in the projects, and the monitoring data collected for the projects to that will allow for us to implement adaptive management strategies based on the findings.

**f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for in the contract?**

Tampa Bay Watch (TBW) has been operating for over 32 years and has successfully completed hundreds of projects and initiatives. If the organization were unable to meet its commitments, TBW understands that funds would be reclaimed/due to the agency, and also recognizes funding for future initiatives would not be considered due to this precedent.

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster? ☐ No

**a. If Yes, what phase best describes the project?**

- ☐ Mitigation (reducing or eliminating potential loss of life or property)
- ☐ Response (addressing the immediate and short-term effects of a natural disaster)
- ☐ Recovery (assisting communities return to normal operations, including rebuilding damaged infrastructure)

**b. Name of the natural disaster (or Executive Order # for events not under a federal declaration):**



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**15. Has the entity applied for or received federal assistance for this project?**

- ☐ Yes, Applied
- ☐ Yes, Received
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, but intends to apply

**a. If yes, provide the FEMA project worksheet ID#:**

**b. Provide the total project cost listed on the FEMA project worksheet:**

**16. Has the entity applied for or received state assistance for this project (other than this request)?**

- ☐ Yes, Applied
- ☐ Yes, Received
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, but intends to apply

**a. If yes, specify the program and state agency (ex. Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan, Department of Commerce):**

**Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.**

**17. Have you been awarded or applied for alternative state funding for this project?**

- ☒ Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- ☒ Resilient Florida Grant Program
- ☒ Wastewater Revolving Loan
- ☒ Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- ☒ Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- ☐ Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants)
- ☒ N/A

**18. What is the population economic status?**



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- ☒ Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- ☒ Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- ☒ Rural Area of Economic Concern
- ☒ Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)
- ☒ N/A

#### 19. What is the status of construction?

Ready

#### 20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

0%

#### 21. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

09/30/2028

#### 22. Requester Contact Information

- a. First Name  Last Name
- b. Organization
- c. E-mail Address
- d. Phone Number  Ext.

#### 23. Recipient Contact Information

- a. Organization
- b. Municipality and County
- c. Organization Type
- ☐ For Profit Entity
- ☒ Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- ☐ Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- ☐ Local Entity
- ☐ University or College
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- d. First Name  Last Name
- e. E-mail Address
- f. Phone Number  Ext.



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LFIR # 1714

#### 24. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name	<input type="text" value="RJ Myers"/>
b. Firm Name	<input type="text" value="Myers Consulting Group"/>
c. E-mail Address	<input type="text" value="rj@myersconsulting.group"/>
d. Phone Number	<input type="text" value="(850)933-0883"/>

*The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.*