

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: April 16, 2008/Key West

Division: BOCC

Bulk Item: Yes No

Department: DISTRICT FIVE

Staff Contact Person/Phone #:

Donna Hanson – 305-852-7175

AGENDA ITEM WORDING: Approval of a resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida, in support of funding for the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act.

ITEM BACKGROUND: See attached resolution.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION:

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

TOTAL COST: N/A

BUDGETED: Yes No

COST TO COUNTY: N/A

SOURCE OF FUNDS: _____

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes No **AMOUNT PER MONTH** _____ **Year** _____

APPROVED BY: County Atty OMB/Purchasing _____ Risk Management _____

DOCUMENTATION: Included Not Required _____

DISPOSITION: _____

AGENDA ITEM # _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____-2008

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY,
FLORIDA, IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING FOR THE
RURAL AND FAMILY LANDS PROTECTION
ACT**

WHEREAS, the conversion and subdivision of agricultural and natural areas on the Florida mainland directly impacts Monroe County's water supply and safe evacuation routes out of the County in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature in the 2001 legislative session adopted the **Rural and Family Lands Protection Act** for the purpose of bringing under public protection lands that serve to limit subdivision and conversion of agricultural and natural areas that provide economic, open space, water, and wildlife benefits by acquiring land or related interests in land; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature found that a thriving rural economy with a strong agricultural base, healthy natural environment and viable rural communities is an essential part of Florida. Rural lands include the largest remaining intact ecosystems and remaining wildlife habitats; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature further recognized the need for enhancing the ability of rural landowners to obtain economic value from their property, protecting rural character, controlling urban sprawl, and providing necessary open space for agriculture and the natural environment; and

WHEREAS, the **Rural and Family Lands Protection Act** is implemented through Chapter 570.71, F.S. Conservation easements and agreements, which authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund to allocate moneys to acquire perpetual, less-than-fee interest in land, to enter into agricultural protection agreements, and to enter into resource conservation agreements to promote and improve wildlife habitat; protect and enhance water bodies, protect aquifer recharge areas, protect wet lands and watersheds; maintain open space on lands with significant natural areas; or protect agricultural lands threatened by conversion to other uses; and

WHEREAS, Rural-lands-protection easements are an appropriate mechanism to maintain privately owned open land in its current state and to prevent the subdivision and conversion of such land into other uses and prohibit activities that would affect the natural hydrology of the land or detrimentally affect water conservation, erosion control, soil conservation, or fish or wildlife habitat; and

WHEREAS, it is 2008 and the **Rural and Family Lands Protection Act** has not been funded to date; and

WHEREAS, Florida is experiencing rapid population growth, with approximately 1,000 new residents everyday and all Floridians deserve a high quality of life that includes green space, access to water, pastoral settings, and recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, according to a USDA report the State of Florida lost over 1000 farms in 2005 alone; and

WHEREAS, the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners finds that the preservation of rural and agricultural lands and an economically viable agricultural industry within the State of Florida is important to the County's over-all safety, health, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners finds that the **Rural and Family Lands Protection Act** provides a mechanism to keep rural lands under private stewardship while helping farm families fiscally, preventing subdivision and conversion of rural lands, and requiring maintenance and enhancement of environmental resources through agricultural and resource conservation agreements;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA, THAT:

1. **The Board supports funding of the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act and any and all action by the State Legislature to provide funding.**
2. **The Clerk is authorized to send letters and copies of the executed resolution to Rep. Ron Saunders, District 120 and Senator Larcenia J. Bullard, District 39 in order to advocate for funding to acquire perpetual, less than fee simple interest in land, as authorized in the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act.**

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida, at a meeting of said Board held on the _____ day of _____, 2008.

Mayor Charles "Sonny" McCoy	_____
Mayor Pro Tem Mario DiGennaro	_____
Commissioner Sylvia Murphy	_____
Commissioner George Neugent	_____
Commissioner Dixie Spehar	_____

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

(Seal)

Attest: **DANNY L. KOLHAGE**, Clerk

By: _____
Mayor Charles "Sonny" McCoy

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Christine M. Limbert-Barrows
 CHRISTINE M. LIMBERT-BARROWS
 ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
 Date 4/2/2008