



# 2023 Legislative Priorities

## Florida Conservation Voters

Florida Conservation Voters (FCV) engages people in our democracy to protect our environment and create healthy communities for everyone. A healthy and vibrant environment is the backbone of a strong economy. Similarly, ensuring opportunities for public engagement leads to safe, fair, and accessible elections. As Florida welcomes hundreds of new residents every day, we must protect and improve the health of our environment and our democracy.

Our legislative priorities reflect our mission, vision, and values of inclusivity, collaboration, and transparency. Please consider the following priorities during the 2023 Legislative Session. As of March 7, 2023, FCV supports or opposes the following bills, and our position may change based on amendments that may alter the final intent of bills. We have also listed policies that may not be reflected in pending bills but that we support and hope you will consider as possible amendments and in future legislative sessions.

You can view our Legislative Priorities  
and track relevant bills online at  
[www.fcvoters.org/2023-legislative-priorities](http://www.fcvoters.org/2023-legislative-priorities)  
or scan the QR code



# CLIMATE & CLEAN ENERGY

Climate change is the single biggest environmental threat facing Florida's communities and our living planet. Fueled by a reliance on dirty fossil fuels, the harmful impacts of this human-made problem are worsening across the state. A steady, equitable, and just transition to clean, renewable energy is crucial to the future of Florida and the world. Florida lawmakers must respond to the climate crisis immediately by prioritizing clean energy and climate solution investments, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity and transportation sectors, democratizing energy, and elevating racial and economic justice and equity.

## **BILLS WE SUPPORT:**

### **SB 970 (Berman)/HB 957 (Eskamani): State Renewable Energy Goals**

Sets renewable energy goals, creates the Renewable Energy Workforce Development Advisory Committee, and prohibits the drilling or exploration of oil, gas or petroleum in Florida.

### **SB 680 (Davis)/HB 293 (Hinson): Energy Transition Task Force**

Creates the Energy Transition Task Force under DACS to foster fair and equitable transition to renewable energy technologies within "minority, underserved, rural, and low-income communities."

### **HB 195 (Cassello, Cross)/SB 178 (Berman): Upgrades of Education Facilities as Emergency Shelters**

Allows school districts to upgrade buildings that serve as emergency shelters with resilience features by exempting upgrades below \$2 million from the statutory per student station cap.

## **BILLS WE OPPOSE:**

### **SB 1238 (Rodríguez)/HB 1217 (Melo): Energy Regulation**

Prohibits regulation of greenhouse gas emissions by certain state and regional programs; prohibits local governments from requiring certain energy-saving building materials or prohibiting certain appliances or vehicles.

### **SB 1256 (Collins)/HB 1281 (Buchanan): Preemption Over Utility Service Restrictions**

Preempts local government's authority to regulate or prohibit the sale of gas appliances.

### **SB 1162 (DiCiglie)/HB 821 (Yeager): Renewable Energy Cost Recovery**

Authorizes public utilities to recover incurred renewable natural gas & hydrogen fuel infrastructure project investments and cost through the PSC cost-recovery mechanism.

### **SB 844 (Yarborough)/HB 867 (Griffitts): Sales Tax Exemption for Renewable Natural Gas Machinery and Equipment**

Provides a sales tax exemption for the purchase of certain machinery and equipment related to extraction, transportation and blending of renewable natural gas.





As Floridians, we are all connected by a common right to clean, abundant water. FCV works to preserve this right, prevent water pollution at the source, and improve water quality. Lawmakers must oppose any policies that would roll back protections for Florida's precious coastal and freshwater wetlands. These wetlands are an essential part of the water cycle, providing vital habitats and food sources for animals, as well as natural filtration for pollution and water storage. The Florida Legislature has an obligation to uphold our right to clean water, both now and for future generations.

## **BILLS WE SUPPORT:**

### **SB 1538 (Stewart)/HB 423 (Cross): Implementation of the Recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force**

Implements common-sense recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, including a septic inspection program and improvements to the Basin Management Action Plan process.

### **SB 592 (Powell)/HB 207 (Edmonds): Notice of Contaminated Water Systems**

Requires public notice of water problems and corrective measures through text messages to owners or occupants of affected residences.

### **SB 172 (Berman)/HB 177 (Gossette- Sigman): Safe Waterways Act**

Requires the Dept. of Health to post public health notifications when beaches or bathing areas are unsafe for bathing due to pollution.

### **SB 734 (Polsky)/HB 1079 (Cross): Saltwater Intrusion Vulnerability Assessments**

Authorizes the Dept. of Environmental Protection to provide Resilient Florida grants to coastal communities for saltwater intrusion vulnerability assessments.

## **BILLS WE OPPOSE:**

### **SB 1240 (Burgess)/HB 1197 (Maggard): Land And Water Management**

Prohibits counties and municipalities from adopting laws, regulations, rules, or policies relating to water quality or quantity, pollution control, pollutant discharge prevention or removal, and wetlands.

### **SB 194 (Hooper)/CS/HB 125 (McClain): Utility System Rate Base Values**

Establishes an alternative procedure for the Public Service Commission to establish rate-base value for acquired utility systems.





# LAND CONSERVATION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

FCV works to protect natural areas, wildlife habitats, and parks. Providing our residents and visitors with the opportunity to connect with nature is invaluable. For this reason, the Florida Legislature must establish dedicated, consistent, and robust funding for Florida's premier conservation programs, like Florida Forever, Florida Communities Trust, and the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program. Furthermore, lawmakers must adhere to their constitutional obligation to keep these programs up and running until 2035 and beyond. Additionally, effective and sustainable growth management policies are essential to help local governments find ways to balance development and environmental protections. FCV is committed to preserving Florida's conservation lands and wildlife for years to come.

## BILLS WE SUPPORT:

### **SB 928 (Stewart)/HB 559 (Roth): Land Acquisition Funding**

Fully funds the suite of water and land conservation programs, including Florida Forever, Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, and Florida Communities Trust.

### **HB 843 (Cross)/SB 816 (Polsky): Challenges to Development Orders**

Prevents 3rd party interveners from collecting attorney fees and costs if voluntarily entering into a lawsuit regarding a challenge to a development.

### **SB 506 (Stewart)/HB 1427 (Casello): Comprehensive Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan**

Requires the Dept. of Environmental Protection to develop a comprehensive waste reduction and recycling plan for this state by July 2024.

## BILLS WE OPPOSE:

### **SB 540 (DiCeglie)/HB 359 (Duggan): Local Government Comprehensive Plans**

Increases the potential financial burden to challenge comprehensive plans or amendments by awarding attorney fees and costs to the prevailing party.

### **SB 1346 (Avila)/HB 1317 (Roach): Local Regulation of Non-Conforming or Unsafe Structures**

Preempts local governments from restricting or prohibiting the demolition of structures located in coastal high-hazard areas, also allowing owners and developers to replace structures in coastal high hazard areas "without regard to local government restrictions that may restrict development of a replacement structure."

### **SB 856 (Rodriguez)/HB 41 (Garcia): Amendments to Land Development Regulations**

Prohibits local referendums related to land development regulations.



# DEMOCRACY

Our democracy depends on transparency, fairness, and increased civic engagement in the public policy process and elections. We will advocate for laws that expand access to the ballot box and protect our fundamental rights, like the citizen initiative process. Fair and truly representative political districts are the bedrock of a healthy republic.

## BILLS WE SUPPORT:

### **HB 501 (Gantt)/SB 1696 (Jones): Restoration of Rights Information on Sentencing Scoresheets**

Requires restoration of voting rights scoresheet to be provided to the eligible defendant before sentence is imposed. Specifies information to be provided on sentencing scoresheets concerning restoration of voting rights.

### **SB 1296 (Thompson)/HB1235 (Robinson): Restoration of Voting Rights**

Requires the Florida Commission on Offender Review to develop and maintain a public online database of financial obligations including fines, fees, costs, and restitution of eligible returning citizens in order to confirm voting status.

### **HB 1469 (Joseph)/SB 1206 (Thompson): Elections**

Proposes changes to the voting process in Florida, including the requirement for the Secretary of State to be elected rather than appointed, preregistration of certain individuals to vote, and the establishment of General Election Day as a paid holiday.

### **SB 1560 (Torres)/HB 1249 (Lopez):**

#### **Limited English-Proficient Voter Assistance**

Requires supervisor of elections or political divisions that administers elections to provide multilingual voter assistance, educational materials, translation services, and to operate and provide public notice of a language assistance hotline.

### **HB 1507 (Nixon)/SB 1668 (Davis): Voting Rights**

Requires the Department of State to provide updates to Florida Supervisors of Elections on ineligible voters. This also will require Supervisors to notify ineligible voters and remove them from the statewide voter registration system.

## BILLS WE OPPOSE:

### **SB 1410 (Gruters)/HRJ 129 (Roth): Requiring Broader Public Support for Constitutional Amendments or Revisions**

Increases percentage of elector votes required to approve amendment to or revision of the State Constitution from 60 percent to 66.7 percent.

### **HJR 405 (Tramont): Prohibition on Open Primaries and Nonpartisan Elections**

Amends the State Constitution to restrict primary elections to qualified electors with the same party affiliation as the candidate, and to prohibit candidates from being prohibited from disclosing party affiliation or campaigning based on party affiliation.







# FIGHTING RACISM AND INJUSTICE

Florida Conservation Voters views local, state and federal policies from an environmental justice lens to fully meet the demands of a complex and intersectional movement, authentic to all Floridians. When our environment suffers, so do people. But not all people suffer equally. Sea level rise, flooding, and air and water pollution are just a few of the environmental challenges that have historically and disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous, Latine, and people of color in economically depressed regions of Florida. It is essential that policies adopted by the Florida Legislature take into account the risks and harms faced by these communities in the state. These policies must not only focus on safeguarding against environmental degradation, but also on equitable distribution of its benefits. Legislative initiatives must be rooted in racial, economic, social, and environmental justice.

## **BILLS WE SUPPORT:**

### **HB 551 (Benjamin)/SB 804 (Simon):**

#### **Required African American Instruction**

Requires each school district to certify and provide certain evidence to DOE to ensure implementation of African American History.

### **SB 1042 (Thompson)/HB 231 (Davis and Eskamani): 1920 Ocoee Election Day Riots**

Proposes the creation of "The Ocoee Scholarship Program" for the direct descendants of victims of the Ocoee Election Day Riots in November 1920 and for current African American residents of Ocoee.

## **BILLS WE OPPOSE:**

### **SB 266 (Grall)/HB 999 (Andrade): Higher Education/Public Post-Secondary Educational Institutions**

Eliminates funding for diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, classes, and activities at all colleges and universities. Eliminates Women's Studies, Gender Studies, and other studies alike from the list of available majors and minors at all state and college universities. Appoints University Board/President over all faculty hiring.



# INTERSECTIONAL PRIORITIES

The issues of climate gentrification, fair wages, affordable housing and energy, access to healthcare, autonomy over one's body, and a robust public education and union presence in Florida are all interconnected. We live in an infinitely complex world where racial, social, and economic justice are inextricably connected to issues of conservation, to the environmental movement, and to democracy. We recognize that the intersectionality of Florida's (and the world's) problems requires comprehensive solutions. We recognize and embrace that these solutions may steer us beyond what people may believe to be environmental or conservation spaces in order to advance racial and economic justice. As an organization dedicated to protecting a healthy and thriving environment, we commit to promoting environmental, racial, social, and economic justice, and to eradicating all forms of oppression that serve as barriers to them.

## **BILLS WE SUPPORT:**

### **SB 1658 (Torres)/HB 1407 Eskamani): Keep Floridians Housed Act**

Creates the Department of Housing and Tenant Rights as a new department of state government; removes the option for a landlord to deposit certain money into a non-interest-bearing account; prohibits a landlord from engaging in certain conduct; prohibits a landlord from evicting a tenant or terminating a rental agreement because the tenant or the tenant's minor child is a victim of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, or stalking.

## **BILLS WE OPPOSE:**

### **SB 1718 (Ingolia): Unlawful Immigration**

Prohibiting counties and municipalities, respectively, from providing funds to any person, entity, or organization to issue identification documents to an individual who does not provide proof of lawful presence in the United States; and does not extend full faith & credit to certain drivers licenses and permits issued by other states to unauthorized immigrants. This bill also requires hospitals to collect patient's immigration status information on admission or registration forms when being treated. The bill also increases the maximum fines that may be imposed related to employing, hiring, recruiting, or referring unauthorized immigrants for private or public employment.

### **HB 1617 (Michael): Unlawful Immigration**

Revises the oath taken by a person registering to vote, as well as the prohibition of counties and municipalities from providing funds to any person, entity, or organization to issue identification documents to individuals who do not provide proof of lawful presence in the US.

