

# Legislative Priorities 2022



# Schedule

- Interim committee weeks are the weeks of:
  - September 20<sup>th</sup>
  - October 11<sup>th</sup>
  - October 18<sup>th</sup>
  - November 1<sup>st</sup>
  - November 15<sup>th</sup>
  - November 29<sup>th</sup>
- Session runs from January 11<sup>th</sup> to March 11<sup>th</sup>

# Considerations for the Session

- It is an election year and policy typically moderates (most recent memory is what sticks with voters)
- Legislators who are termed out are often given “a going away present”
- Sierra’s focus will continue to be making bills “less bad” as the good bills will likely not have a hearing
- Sen. Book is the new minority leader, replacing Sen. Farmer
- There are NO COVID protections in place at the Capitol. What does that mean for public participation?

# Sierra Club is “Too Pure”

- Persuading the majority party in committee is an exercise in futility at this point. However, it doesn't have to be a waste of time. Even if the majority (which is very tightly controlled by their leadership) refuses to bend on anything, there is a major opportunity to make a difference.
  - The press covers these meetings and we can speak to the public through them. Conflict makes for a good story. And that story can help us get new members in legislative seats.
  - A strong policy disagreement between Republicans and Democrats makes a better story than Republicans vs. Sierra Club and is more likely to have a story written about it, so **we need to get Dem leaders to lead by example and also encourage members to speak out.** This can be a win-win for us and the Democrats.
- **Sierra Club speaks the truth.** It is not our job to “cut deals”. Our stating the truth widens the conversation and increases the chances of “getting more.”
- We have a specific role to play in the “political theater” and it should not be diminished. This must be explained to legislators who claim we should do something different.

# Legislative Priorities

- Developed with staff and volunteer input and approval
  - Conservation and Energy Committees
  - Tactical Committee
  - Lobbying Advisory Committee
  - Executive Committee

# Priorities Documents

- Detailed guide for internal decisions
  - Can be viewed at:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TL9UvtQydGzawAiWyvvrjobGdR41JQ0B/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108526973188588752128&rtpof=true&sd=true>
- Public facing documents
  - High level overview (to discuss in legislator meetings)
  - Top 3 priority talking points (for delegation meetings)
    - Climate change
    - Land conservation
    - Water quality and quantity
- All will be posted on the Sierra website legislative page in near future

# Values Statements

- We support policies that recognize and preserve cultural and environmental community assets, and ensure that frontline communities do not suffer disproportionate negative impacts but do share in beneficial changes.
- We must address the existential threat of climate change and its impacts while considering equity, inclusion, and justice to create a healthier, more equitable future for all.

# The Short Version

- ▶ **Climate change:** Floridians' risk from stronger storms and sea-level rise caused by climate change is a function of both past and future emissions. Florida must reduce its use of fossil fuels now by **transitioning to 100% renewable energy statewide** before 2050 with 100% renewable energy used for all state-funded operations by 2035. We want to see solar incentivized/expanded, an end to the development of new fossil fuels, and prioritization of electric vehicles and related infrastructure.
- ▶ **Land conservation:** Left in their natural state, our lands keep an immense amount of climate pollution out of the atmosphere and provide economic and quality of life benefits. We need to **keep our remaining undeveloped lands intact** by preserving open spaces and wetlands, enhancing regional wildlife corridors, and avoiding fragmentation of habitat. We must acquire sufficient conservation land to ensure future generations' ability to rely on sustainable ecosystem services, outdoor recreation lands, and wildlife/ landscape/ ecotourism resources.
- ▶ **Smart growth:** Once a model for the nation, Florida's growth management laws, having been gutted since 2011, now prioritize developers over residents. We must **reinstitute state and regional oversight of growth management** to promote economically prosperous, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable communities. Florida also must become more resilient to the now unavoidable impacts of climate change. Land use must adapt to new environmental parameters, and policies must not force our most vulnerable communities to bear more than their share of the burden.



- ▶ **Water quality and quantity:** Current water quality and quantity statutes are full of loopholes and empty promises of restoration in 35 years. Florida **must stop pollution at its source** rather than cleaning it up after the fact, and **limit permits** to withdrawals that will not harm natural systems. Florida needs to appropriately regulate fertilizer, septic tanks, stormwater, and sewage systems, and address the problems that biosolids present.
- ▶ **Democracy:** We must protect and defend the most fundamental elements of our democracy for all Floridians by **breaking down barriers to participation**, ensuring that each of us has an equal voice and vote. We will defend and advocate for: voting rights, fair redistricting, the right to assemble, freedom of speech, citizen initiatives, and public participation in government decision-making.
- ▶ **Environmentally appropriate home rule:** Let local governments lead by allowing them to supplement state law with stricter restrictions to **protect their own resources and constituents**.

# Pro-active Legislation in Development

- A “fix” to the **tree trimming statute**- a full repeal won't happen in this legislature.
  - Remove the possibility of "clear-cut" abuse (the language is hugely overbroad and has been abused by unscrupulous arborists to the detriment of communities and the environment writ large)
  - Requires dealing with a situation where a person or property actually was in danger. It's hard to argue that in such a case a property owner be prevented from taking necessary action to ameliorate the situation.
  - Focus on using language that reflects what arborists do- which is assess risk: “providing that a tree poses an unacceptable risk if removal is the only means of practically mitigating its risk below moderate as defined by specified standards”
  - Find a way to get around a Senate staffer who refuses to allow this to be heard in “his” committee

# What bills we are seeing so far.....

- ▶ HB 11: Impeding, Provoking, or Harassing Law Enforcement Officers
- ▶ HB 75: Limiting COVID-19 Restrictions
- ▶ HB 81: State Renewable Energy Goals
- ▶ HB 101: Resiliency Energy Environment Florida (SB 228)
- ▶ HB 105: Regulation of Smoking by Counties and Municipalities (SB 224)
- ▶ SJR 152: Supermajority Vote for Legislative Preemption
- ▶ HB 157: Transportation Projects
- ▶ SB 182: Renewable Energy
- ▶ SB 198: Seagrass Mitigation Banks
- ▶ SB 208: Well Stimulation
- ▶ SB 238: Endangered and Threatened Species
- ▶ SB 280 : Local Ordinances
- ▶ SB 320: (Repeal) Preemption of Recyclable & Polystyrene Materials
- ▶ HB 6003: Legal Rights of the Natural Environment
- ▶ HB 6019: (Repeal) Preemption of Over-the-Counter Drugs & Cosmetics
- ▶ HB 6025: (Repeal) Preemption of Tree Pruning, Trimming, & Removal (SB 316)

Questions?