



INDIAN RIVER LAGOON ROUNDTABLE

A GRASSROOTS ENVIRONMENTAL DISCUSSION GROUP

<https://irlroundtable.com/forum/>

The Honorable Thad Altman and Brevard Legislative Delegation.

Dec. 29, 2022

Dear Delegation:

I am writing on behalf of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Roundtable, a nonpartisan, non-affiliated grassroots organization made up of long-time citizen environmentalists paying particular attention to the challenge of establishing balance between space development and our community's unique lagoon and quality of life.

www.IRLroundtable.com.

There is strong evidence that the built environment at Kennedy Space Center (KSC), dating from the 1960's, and including impoundments and flow obstructions, is a significant contributor to our lagoon's condition. Now, intense new development by the commercial space industry goes on with no planning or tracking of the cumulative impact on the lagoon. Hundreds of acres of new impervious surface will result in millions of gallons of additional stormwater run-off and a massive increase in the volume of industrial wastewater emptying into the lagoon, speeding its death. This new development must not be allowed to further harm our lagoon.

The North IRL is in bad shape with little recovery of seagrass and other threatened marine life. The August 2022 Revision of the NASA/KSC Indian River Lagoon Health Initiative Plan (Plan c-2, attached) states "The last decade has seen dramatic seagrass loss due to repeated algal blooms consistent with eutrophication (excessive nutrients) of the system, the effects of which are apparent in segments of the IRL proper, Banana River Lagoon (BRL), and Mosquito Lagoon that lie within the jurisdictional boundaries of KSC." Our lagoon will not survive if we continue developing in the same manner that got us where we are today.

Although the Plan c-2 examines the problems plaguing the lagoon, most of the proposed remediation projects in the Plan c-2 lack funding. For us to achieve a balance between our rapidly developing Spaceport and our lagoon and quality of life, the space industry must become actively engaged in the community's effort to restore and prevent further harm to our lagoon.

We suggest that an excellent way to foster this engagement would be for the State to assist in funding some of the currently important but unfunded projects from the Plan c-2. Two projects that would greatly benefit the lagoon and identified as high priority are described on Pages 14-15 of the Plan c-2. They are **Expanded Living Shorelines**, and **Improved Northern BRL Circulation**.

Assisting KSC in this fashion benefits the lagoon and establishes a precedent for active collaboration between the public and our growing space community.

By your words and actions each of you have shown that you are dedicated to restoring our lagoon. And, you are aware of the strong commitment Brevard taxpayers have made to correcting pollution problems in the lagoon through their approval of the \$450M Save Our Indian River Lagoon Plan and their recent 72%+ voter approval of the extension of the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, which we fully support.

Now we hope that you will take action on this recommendation to encourage balance between our space development and our community's unique lagoon and quality of life.

Sincerely,

Laurilee Thompson, for the Indian River Lagoon Roundtable
laurileethompson@aol.com (321) 794-6866