

Sierra Club Florida's 2020 legislative priorities focus on **energy**, **water quality/quantity**, **planning for growth**, **state interference in local decision-making**, and the **budget**. See how things turned out this legislative session.

The Issue	What Happened	What We Want
Energy	<p>Legislation to ban all forms of well stimulation died in committee.</p> <p>SB 7018 requires DOT to create a master plan for EV charging stations along state highways. But the bill also makes it easier for utilities to use conservation easements on agricultural property for linear facilities, including oil and gas pipelines.</p>	<p>Act to limit climate change and move to renewable energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ban all forms of well stimulation (fracking and matrix acidization) and prevent the development of new fossil fuels in Florida. Grow mass transit and include it in the Department of Transportation work plan. Promote use of Electric Vehicles by expanding charging infrastructure. Transition to 100% renewable energy and cut greenhouse gas emissions. Modernize the Florida Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act (FEECA) through the rulemaking process so that we can have meaningful efficiency and solar goals.
Water Quality	<p>SB 712, the misnamed "Clean Waterways Act" :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to fix the broken BMAP program doesn't require agriculture to meet water quality laws fatally weakens rules regarding application of biosolids <p>One good note: strong regulation for Waste Water Treatment Plants</p>	<p>Prevent water pollution by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stopping pollution at its source. Regulating pollutants, including fertilizer, septic tanks, storm water, and sewage systems. Banning the land application of all classes of biosolids. Setting clear mandatory standards for performance and upgrades, then funding and enforcing them.
Water Quantity	<p>Nothing was done to protect our springs from water bottlers.</p> <p>Legislation exploring water fees was heard in committee but failed to move forward.</p>	<p>Prevent over pumping by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a "water budget" based on available groundwater, monitoring use by permit holders, and limiting permits to withdrawals that will not harm natural systems. Imposing a fee for large water users including agriculture, utilities, and companies which bottle and sell our water. <p>Establishing standards for reclaimed water used to augment surface or groundwater resources that ensure the resource will not be contaminated by nutrients, pharmaceuticals, endocrine disruptors, or other contaminants of emerging concern.</p>
Toll Roads	<p>Legislators "sweetened the pot" for M-CORES by prioritizing funding for broadband, planning, and emergency staging for communities in the path of the proposed toll roads.</p>	<p>Repeal M-CORES</p>

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Growth Management	<p>SB 410 continues the assault on growth management by requiring that each local comprehensive plan include a new private property rights element which adds no additional property rights protection for individuals and could cost localities as much as \$100,000 depending on the size of the community. It subjects more municipalities to development orders superseding comprehensive plans and further limits the authority of county governments to manage growth within their borders and could clear the way for high-density development in designated rural areas.</p>	<p>Reinstitute state and regional oversight of growth management to promote smart growth and the conservation of natural lands and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise. • Preserve open spaces and wetlands, enhance regional wildlife corridors, and avoid fragmenting habitat. • Include the availability of water, and the impact of development on water and wetlands. • Promote walkable communities, infill and redevelopment, and discourage automobile dependent design by encouraging transit-oriented development. • Co-locate mass transit in existing corridors and prevent sprawl. • Protect ranch and agricultural lands from development by investing in permanent conservation easements (Rural & Family Lands Protection).
State Interference in Local Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Rights of Nature laws were preempted (SB 712). • Over-the-counter drugs and cosmetics were preempted (SB 172); specifically aimed at ending Key West’s ban on the sale of sunscreens containing octinoxate or oxybenzone as they are harmful to coral reefs. Bills dealing with repealing the preemption of local regulation of plastics and local government enforcement of tree ordinances were never heard. • SB 410 establishes the “shot clock” provision for utilities. Missing a 14 day deadline results in automatic permit approval. 	<p>Citizens have a right to enact regulations that reflect their community values. Let local governments govern. Take action to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeal the statute awarding attorney fees and costs to prevailing party in a consistency challenge of a development order. • Remove the preemption on local regulation of plastic bags, wrappings, and auxiliary containers and allow localities to supplement state law with stricter regulations as they see fit. • Repeal HB 1159 (2019) that prevents a local governments’ enforcement of tree ordinances if a certified arborist says a tree is a danger to persons or property. Healthy trees posing no threat are being cut down across the state on the word of hired gun arborists. Alternatively, address the conflict of interest inherent in professional certification by making the false documentation of a tree as a “danger” a felony. • Prevent legislative interference with local efforts addressing disposal of non-recyclable materials.
Budget	<p>Land acquisition was funded at \$100 million.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100 million total: Rural & Family Lands Protection Program (\$8,657,250); FL Recreation Development Assistant Program (\$12,342,750); Land Acquisition- Environmentally Unique (\$67 million); Working Waterfronts Program (\$2 million); Florida Communities Trust (\$10 million) • Sources: \$15 million from GR, \$79 million from LATF, \$6 million FL Forever Trust Fund 	<p>In order to “fully fund” Florida Forever in 2020-2021, the \$485.68 million that is left in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) after debt service and statutorily required distribution (Everglades, Springs, Lake Apopka) must be allocated to Florida Forever:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pursuant to the purposes and requirements of the 2014 Water and Land Conservation constitutional amendment; and • in such a way as to eliminate the current inequitable distribution of LATF funds by bringing statutory balance between environmental investment in the north and south of the state. <p>Invest in converting State vehicles to electric vehicles.</p>