



FLORIDA SHORE & BEACH PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

A League of Cities, Counties, and other Coastal Interests on Beach Issues

FSBPA 2019 Legislative Funding and Policy Highlights

\$50 Million Appropriated for Beach and Inlet Projects

The statewide beach management program secured a legislative appropriation of \$50 million for the third year in a row. At the beginning of the year, our funding objectives were to repeat \$50M in funding for FY 19/20, secure proviso that gave the Department of Environmental Protection the discretion to fund additional unfunded projects in priority order, and to maintain funding emphasis on inlet management and post-construction monitoring. The legislative appropriation was only possible with support from the Chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and Subcommittees, Senate and House Leadership, and numerous legislative beach champions that helped to secure \$50M in the FY2019/20 General Appropriations Act. FSBPA is further grateful for the support of our members and the coalition of coastal interests.

Coastal Management

Governor DeSantis signed HB 325 into law on June 24, 2019, addressing three sections of Ch. 161, the Beach & Shore Preservation Act. A brief summary is provided.

The legislation, sponsored by Senator Debbie Mayfield and Representative Chip LaMarca, **modernizes and refines the criteria for ranking beach and inlet sand management projects** to better capture the **economic importance of healthy beaches** to tourism, storm damage reduction and resource protection. This will give Legislators the confidence that projects receiving annual appropriations represent the best investment of limited state dollars and fund the projects of greatest need. Expressed legislative intent and priority are provided for the very first time.

In addition to economic benefits, there are criteria to rank projects based on **Federal and local matching funds**, recreational benefits, project significance, project mobility, readiness-to-proceed, dune enhancement and habitat protection, and strategies to conserve sand resources.

The law **enhances inlet funding** and provides that the minimum amount of funding for inlets must be 10% of the appropriation for beach management or a proportion of inlet dollars requested as a proportion of the total amount of statewide beach management dollars requested, whichever is greater. It also reduces the state cost share for ongoing sand bypassing activities to 50% like beach projects but continues to provide 75% for initial construction of major components. These changes will refocus attention on **effective sand management at our inlets**, long considered the #1 cause of beach erosion on Florida's East Coast.

The law creates a **3-year work plan** so that Florida can maximize federal dollars and local project sponsors can anticipate required funding needs, finalize design, and secure permits and easements, so that projects can proceed to timely construction. The success of a 3-year work plan will be dependent upon a predictable annual funding source and amount.

Lastly, there will be **greater accountability and transparency** for use of appropriated funds.

For more information about the enacted law go to <http://laws.flrules.org/2019/122>.

