



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 20-0299, **Version:** 1

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**Agenda Item Name:**

Memorandum of Agreement to continue the Turf SWAP Landscaping Rebate Program and inter-fund loan.

**Presenter:**

Stacie Greco, 264-6829

**Description:**

Request signature for the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the Suwannee River Water Management District for the Turf SWAP landscaping Rebate Program, and approve an inter-fund loan for \$100,000.

**Recommended Action:**

Sign the MOA for the Turf SWAP Rebate program and approve an inter-fund loan for \$100,000.

**Prior Board Motions:**

The initial Turf SWAP rebate program was approved during the 12/13/16 BoCC meeting.

**Fiscal Consideration:**

EPD staff will administer the grant funded program and minimal Gainesville Clean Water Partnership Funds (087-5519 and 087-5511) may be used for program promotion.

Funds:

258.55.5511.337.3100 - Revenue

258.55.5511.537.82.31 - Expense

These funds are already budgeted; however, since the program operates on a reimbursement basis, the Department needs an inter-fund loan to begin the project.

**Background:**

Outdoor water use is commonly credited for up to 60% of residential water use; hence EPD largely focuses conservation efforts on reducing discretionary outdoor water use. Researchers at the University of Florida (Friedman et al, 2013) estimated that nearly 90% of new homes in the GRU service area are built with in-ground irrigation systems. This trend, up from only 10% in 1983, will continue to contribute to excessive outdoor water use. While Alachua County adopted an irrigation efficiency ordinance in 2015 for ensuring that future irrigation systems are installed efficiently, an incentive is needed for reducing water use from the over 10,000 existing irrigation systems in the GRU service area alone.

The County received \$300,000 in funding from the North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership FY2015-2016 Springs Water Conservation Cost-Share Funding opportunity for the Turf SWAP (Save Water, Add Plants) program to provide rebates to property owners that replace irrigated turf with

Florida Friendly Landscapes (FFL). Through this program 135 participants removed or capped 1,901 irrigation heads, which removed 400,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of high volume irrigation to save an estimated 16 million gallons of water a year. The rebate program ended in January 2019, but staff has continued to generate interest in landscaping retrofits and has a list of interested participants.

Through the attached Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Florida of Department of Environmental Protection funds will be administered through the Suwannee River Water Management District to Alachua County to provide an additional \$100,000 in Turf SWAP rebates through June 2021. The program will offer property owners 50% rebates up to \$1,500 per property for water saving landscaping retrofits performed by participating Florida Water Star Accredited Landscaping and Irrigation Professionals. The property owner's contribution will provide the \$100,000 match, bringing the project total up to \$200,000.