

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: March 15, 2010

Date Submitted: February 26, 2010

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Commissioner Kessler

Subject: Request Board Support of Funds to Gulf Specimen Marine Lab to Develop Oyster Aqua-Culture

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item requests Board consideration of voting to support a County grant to Gulf Specimen Marine Laboratory in the amount of \$18,271.00 in order to establish the research and data collection necessary to potentially seek larger state and federal grants which would be used to establish “artificial oyster beds.”

Background:

In the past the fishing industry in Wakulla County employed many people and was a significant economic engine providing jobs and opportunities for the fishermen. Now, the fishing industry, although a shadow of its former self, still is the source of jobs and opportunity for many of our residents. Shell fishing, specifically oyster fishing, can potentially be given a rebirth by using the methods being used elsewhere that are successful in creating new oyster beds. Funding is being sought from the County in order to provide the research needed for the successful application of larger grants. These large grants would provide the funding for the creation and protection of new oyster beds. This is a complex issue that will require not only the establishment of these new oyster beds but also the protection of these beds so that they can establish themselves and become sustainable. Governmental agencies will need to see the data, the prototypes and hear the support of experts. This request has the potential of opening our bays for new life and prosperity. Additionally, will provide cleaner bay waters, jobs for our fishermen and renewed vitality for an industry in desperate need of revitalization.

Analysis:

New oyster beds would not only help clean up the pollution in our bays but would also give rise to new jobs and opportunities for our many struggling and unemployed fishermen. The funding being sought in this agenda item is so that a rebirth of a shellfish industry can take place and give employment to many fishermen who desperately need jobs. Without the needed research and collection of data and support of experts, it would be very difficult if not impossible to obtain the large grants and or other funding needed in order to make this project a success.

Options:

1. Vote to approve the funding to Gulf Specimen Marine Lab in the amount of \$18,271.000.
2. Do not vote to approve the funding to Gulf Specimen Marine Lab in the amount of \$18,271.000.
3. Board Direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1

Attachments:

1. Summary of Proposal including scope of work and references