



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES COMMISSIONER ADAM H. PUTNAM

September 15, 2015

Ms. Cynthia Kelly, Director
Office of Policy and Budget
Executive Office of the Governor
The Capitol, Room 1702
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Ms. Kelly:

Enclosed is the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for FY 2016-17 through FY 2020-21, which will be posted to the Florida Fiscal Portal, following the instructions dated July 2015. The information provided electronically is a true and accurate presentation of our proposed Fixed Capital Outlay Legislative Budget Request of \$70,725,787 for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

This proposal reflects the department's commitment to foster continued growth and ensure the long-term sustainability of Florida's agriculture industry, as well as serve as a good steward of the state's natural resources, help ensure the safety and wholesomeness of food and protect consumers from fraud and deceptive business practices.

Agricultural water policies are among the most critical issues facing the state. Recognizing the importance of this issue, the department's proposal includes \$15 million for nutrient reduction and water retention projects in the Lake Okeechobee, St Lucie and Caloosahatchee River watersheds. These projects have the potential to result in significant reductions in nutrient loads reaching the lake and surrounding estuaries.

Maintaining Florida's agricultural land base is another critically important issue within the state. Florida's agriculture industry is a pillar of the state's economy, generating \$120 billion in annual economic impact and supporting 2 million jobs. This industry relies on available agricultural lands to grow and remain strong. The department's proposal includes \$25 million for the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, which seeks to prevent development through the acquisition of perpetual conservation easements, thereby allowing agricultural operations to continue, protecting natural resources and providing critical wildlife habitat.

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In addition, protection of the agriculture industry, as well as the residents of this state, remains a top priority of the department. The department's proposal includes \$10.3 million for the construction of a new diagnostic animal lab in Kissimmee to replace an existing facility and \$3.7 million for the construction of a new petroleum laboratory and multi-purpose space on the site of the Pompano State Farmer's Market. These lab facilities are critical in the protection of the public and the agricultural industry from potentially harmful animal diseases and low quality petroleum products.

The department's proposal also includes a number of maintenance and repair and code correction projects, totaling approximately \$9.8 million across the department's various divisions and offices. These projects include roof and HVAC replacements, as well as road and bridge repairs, and maintenance and small construction at our state forests and state farmer's markets. These projects are important to ensure the safety of the department's employees, as well as the individuals that access the department's facilities and state forests.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. If you have any questions, feel free to call me or my staff at (850) 410-2280.

Sincerely,



Adam H. Putnam
Commissioner of Agriculture

Enclosure