



6650 Professional Parkway West, Suite 102
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June 17, 2026

The Honorable Tom Tiffany
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany,

On behalf of the Suncoast Builders Association, representing hundreds of businesses and thousands of professionals engaged in housing, construction, development, and related industries throughout Southwest Florida, I am writing to respectfully urge your support for H.R. 642, the Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation Act, and to encourage the Committee to advance this legislation for further consideration.

The Myakka River is one of Florida's most treasured natural resources. Flowing through Manatee, Sarasota, and Charlotte Counties, it provides extraordinary ecological, recreational, and economic benefits to our region. For more than four decades, local governments, private property owners, environmental organizations, businesses, and community leaders have worked together under the framework established by the Florida Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act to protect this remarkable waterway while accommodating responsible growth and economic opportunity.

As an organization that advocates daily for housing, economic development, infrastructure investment, and private property rights, our support for this legislation should not be viewed lightly. We recognize that successful conservation policy must respect local communities, preserve property rights, and avoid unnecessary federal intrusion. H.R. 642 accomplishes those objectives.

Importantly, this legislation does not create a federal land acquisition program, imposes new zoning regulations, restricts lawful private property rights, or interferes with local land-use authority. Rather, it recognizes a river corridor that has already demonstrated a successful history of collaborative management and stewardship. The proposed designation provides national recognition and access to resources that can help ensure the continued preservation of a waterway that is deeply valued by residents, businesses, and visitors alike.



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The Myakka River is also an important economic asset. It contributes significantly to tourism, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and the overall quality of

life that attracts families, employers, and investment to Southwest Florida. Protecting the river's natural character is not contrary to economic prosperity; it is one of the reasons our communities continue to thrive.

As this legislation falls within the jurisdiction of the House Natural Resources Committee and its Subcommittee on Federal Lands, we respectfully ask you as Chairman, and other members of the Committee to recognize that Southwest Florida's business community is not opposed to this designation. On the contrary, many of the businesses that help drive our regional economy support this effort because it reflects a balanced approach that protects a treasured natural resource while respecting economic growth and private property rights.

Furthermore, H.R. 642 does not conflict with or alter the administration of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The legislation neither expands federal permitting authority nor creates additional permitting requirements beyond those already established under existing federal and state law. Activities requiring authorization under Section 404 will continue to be reviewed under the same regulatory framework administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and applicable resource agencies. The proposed Wild and Scenic designation simply recognizes the outstanding natural values of the Myakka River and supports ongoing stewardship efforts; it does not create a new layer of regulatory oversight for property owners, businesses, or local governments. For stakeholders concerned about permitting certainty and regulatory predictability, it is important to understand that H.R. 642 preserves the existing balance between environmental protection and responsible economic activity already embodied within the Clean Water Act.

Too often, conservation measures are portrayed as conflicting with business interests. The Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation Act demonstrates that such a conflict does not exist here. This legislation enjoys support from local governments, conservation advocates, recreation enthusiasts, residents, and members of the business community who understand that environmental stewardship and economic prosperity are complementary goals, not competing ones.

We are concerned that despite broad stakeholder engagement, years of study, and substantial local support, this legislation has not yet received the momentum it deserves. We respectfully ask that the concerns of interests outside



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our region, do not outweigh the voices of the communities, businesses, property owners, and local governments that live and work alongside the Myakka River every day. Those of us with the greatest stake in the river's future support this legislation and believe it warrants favorable consideration.

Southwest Florida has demonstrated that responsible growth and conservation can coexist. The Myakka River stands as one of the finest examples of that partnership. H.R. 642 reflects decades of successful local stewardship and deserves the opportunity to move forward through the legislative process.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our nation. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our support for H.R. 642 and answer any questions the Committee or its staff may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Mast".

Jon Mast
Chief Executive Officer
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