



## Citrus County Chamber of Commerce 2026 Legislative Priorities

*Presented to Legislative Delegation: 10/30/25*

### Introduction

The Citrus County Chamber of Commerce supports policies and projects that strengthen our local economy, enhance quality of life, and promote sustainable growth. Our focus remains on creating a skilled workforce, supporting business development, protecting our natural resources, and ensuring that Citrus County remains a place where residents and employers can thrive.

Each year, the Chamber surveys its members to identify business-related concerns and priorities. We then coordinate with Citrus County and the cities of Crystal River and Inverness to align priorities that best advance shared community and economic goals.

As the Florida Legislature enters the 2026 Session, the Chamber respectfully requests consideration and support for the following priorities.

### 1. Public Safety / Judicial Space Needs

Leading Entity	Appropriation Request	Local Match / Funding Source	Description / Notes
A. Citrus County & Citrus County School Board	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000 Fire Impact Fees; \$250,000 School Board	<i>Regional Public Safety Training Facility (First Responder):</i> Replace outdated facility with a regional hub for advanced training.
B. Citrus County	\$5,000,000	N/A	<i>Judicial &amp; Government Space Expansion:</i> Address critical shortages in facilities and land to accommodate new judicial allocations.

## 2. Water Quality & Environmental Stewardship

### *Septic-to-Sewer Conversions / Stormwater Management*

Leading Entity	Appropriation Request	Local Match / Funding Source	Description / Notes
A. Citrus County	\$6,227,894	\$4,000,000 – Springs Grant (contingent on approval)	<i>Floral City Expansion:</i> Expand septic-to-sewer conversions to meet BMAP requirements and interconnect existing package plants serving Floral City Elementary School.
B. Crystal River	1) \$2,000,000 2) \$4,000,000	\$1,800,000 City Match \$11,544,500 Springs Restoration Grant (contingent on approval)	1) Southern City Area: Remove 276 septic tanks and connect to central sewer system. 2) Northern City Area: Phase II of Indian Waters project, removing 81 septic tanks.

### *Stormwater Infrastructure*

- The Chamber urges the Legislature to support innovation and infrastructure investments to manage stormwater effectively, protecting springs, lakes, rivers, and drinking water resources essential to public health and our tourism economy.

### *Water Quality / Restoration*

Leading Entity	Appropriation Request	Local Match / Funding Source	Description / Notes
A. Save Crystal River	\$5,000,000	N/A	1) Continued Lyngbya removal and planting of seagrass in Kings Bay and the adjoining canals. 2) Springs Restoration – removal of Lyngbya and debris in the spring vents, particularly after the last 4 hurricanes. 3) Island Restoration and Resiliency on the 4 main islands in Kings Bay. that have lost over 127 acres of shoreline and vegetation of the inland storm barrier for Crystal River.

<b>Leading Entity</b>	<b>Appropriation Request</b>	<b>Local Match / Funding Source</b>	<b>Description / Notes</b>
B. Homosassa River Restoration Project	\$2,000,000	N/A	Ongoing spring and river cleanup efforts.
C. Citrus / Marion / Levy Counties	Special Consideration only (placeholder)	N/A	<i>Lower Withlacoochee River Restoration:</i> Support ecological flow restoration and water quality improvements.

### **Statewide Measures Supported**

- Sustain funding for FWC’s Invasive Plant Management Section.
- Continue support for septic conversion programs where sewer is not yet accessible.
- Reinstate the statewide scope of the Water Quality Improvement Grant Program.

### **3. Transportation & Infrastructure**

<b>Leading Entity</b>	<b>Appropriation Request</b>	<b>Local Match / Funding Source</b>	<b>Project Description</b>
A. Citrus County	\$2,500,000	\$1,210,000 committed; \$5,200,000 approved state funding	<i>Halls River Road Multi-Use Path:</i> Enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and multimodal connectivity.
B. City of Inverness	\$2,000,000	Up to \$500,000	<i>West Inverness Trail Connector:</i> Connects Withlacoochee State Trail with Whispering Pines Park, improving mobility and tourism, along with important public safety upgrades
C. Citrus County	Special Consideration only (placeholder)	N/A	<i>County Road 491 Expansion:</i> Support for the county’s request to be notified of any roadway expansion-eligible funding programs through State or Federal avenues. 491 is a major evacuation route and economic corridor for Citrus and surrounding counties that is

Leading Entity	Appropriation Request	Local Match / Funding Source	Project Description
			experiencing significant traffic increase due to the Suncoast Parkway extension.
D. Citrus County	None (policy support)		<i>Transportation Concurrency:</i> Streamline local reinstatement to improve growth management and reduce congestion.

#### 4. Quality of Life & Recreation

Leading Entity	Appropriation Request	Local Match / Funding Source	Project Description
A. City of Inverness	\$2,000,000	\$1,000,000	<i>Whispering Pines RV Campground:</i> Create a small RV campground generating operational revenue to enhance park amenities.

#### 5. Housing, Childcare & Workforce Support

##### *Affordable Housing*

- Support incentives for:
  - Development of **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)** where appropriate.
  - **Employer investment** in workforce housing.
  - **Attainable housing construction** for owners and renters.
- Continue **property insurance reforms** to improve affordability.

##### *Childcare Accessibility*

- Advance policies that expand access to **affordable, quality childcare**, enabling parents to remain active in the workforce.

##### *Benefits Cliffs*

- Protect recent reforms (such as the School Readiness Plus Program (HB 1267) that helps low-income working families maintain childcare subsidies as their income increases) to ensure that families are not penalized for career advancement.

## **6. Additional Support**

In the spirit of unity, the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce lends support to the remaining legislative priorities of **Citrus County** and the **Cities of Crystal River and Inverness**.

*(Additional placeholders for pending organizational requests may be inserted as received.)*