TALKING POINTS OPPOSING THE RIVER OF GRASS GREENWAY (ROGG)

The River of Grass Greenway would be an additional 76-mile, hard surface, 12 to 14 feet wide path across the Everglades with its attendant fill, bridges, and shelters.

● Thank you for voting on this resolution **to rescind support of ROGG and remove it from the Map. Please vote yes.**

● **The proposed resolution would Respect Indigenous Rights.** ROGG would cut through the ancestral lands, sacred sites, and burial grounds of the Miccosukee, Seminole, and Simanolee people who still inhabit the area and have a historic relationship with the land. It would intrude upon their privacy and disturb their culture by routing an additional 500,000 visitors a year past their many villages and camps. Just as we wouldn't build a bike path through Arlington Cemetery, so too, we should not build one on indigenous ancestral land. No amount of mitigation or revision will make this project acceptable; the Tribe has been saying no for 10 years.

● **The proposed resolution would Protect Irreplaceable Wetlands.** ROGG would destroy wetlands since it cuts across six state and federal parks, including a World Heritage Site and Outstanding Florida Waters. Project plans include bull-dozing, dredging, filling in, and providing rest areas every 10 to 12 miles with parking, restrooms, water, vending machines, and shelters strong enough to withstand tropical storms. Plans also call for up to 70 new bridges as well as spurs and boardwalks leading into wetlands.

● **The proposed resolution would Promote Everglades Restoration.** ROGG would cut through the heart of the Everglades restoration project—Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Collier-Seminole State Park, and Picayune Strand State Forest. Yet, ROGG is working independently of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), a massive 30-year, joint federal and state effort to protect some 2.4 million acres of interconnected wetlands. ROGG would potentially undermine restoration by driving out wildlife, destroying wetlands, and, creating another dam, like U.S. 41, impeding water flow.

● **The proposed resolution would Step Back from a Controversial and Unsafe Project.** ROGG is a highly controversial project with widespread opposition. The Miccosukee Tribe issued an official letter against ROGG that includes a list of federal acts it breaks; while the Simanolee Council vehemently opposes it and spearheaded efforts to stop it with a series of public actions, most notably a six day walk across the Everglades coupled with fire circles and press conferences. Betty Osceola has gathered over 5,500 signatures on a petition against ROGG and the Sierra Club has a letter with over 65 organizations opposing it including businesses along the ROGG route—like Trail Lakes Campgrounds, Coopertown Everglades Airboat Tours, Everglades Conservation and Sportsman Club, Florida Airboat Association, and Joanies's Blue Crab Café. It's unsafe because plans call for narrowing traffic lanes up to 25% and the route includes over 100 intersections.

● **The proposed resolution would Promote Pathways in Communities and Cities.** Presently U.S. 41 already has a designated bike lane running from Naples to Miami.   An additional path is unnecessary and redundant, if not, frivolous and irresponsible, since Collier County has a greater need for safe pathways within city limits and communities like Golden Gate and Immokalee, where commuters could use them daily. Functional pathways for the many are far more important than recreational corridors for the few, especially when the business owners, residents, and tribal people along the ROGG corridor, strongly oppose it.

- **The proposed resolution would Encourage Economic Responsibility.** The costs of ROGG outweigh the benefits. The $140 million dollars it would cost to build would be better spent restoring the Everglades or building pathways within densely populated areas where residents could use them daily. ROGG is not a critical need, just a recreational corridor. Additionally, who exactly is going to pay for building and maintaining it? Collier County and Miami-Dade County? Tallahassee? The National Park Service who is understaffed and underfunded? Who benefits from this project? And how exactly can we expect our first responders to travel the distance to rescue people, if needed, from this desolate stretch? After 10 years of study, and a price tag of $1 million, the Feasibility Study and Master Plan should answer these important questions.

- **The proposed resolution would Preserve Critical Wildlife Habitat.** The ROGG Study Area includes designated critical habitat for the endangered Florida panther, Cape Sable seaside sparrow, American crocodile, West Indian manatee, Everglades snail kite, Small-tooth sawfish and Core Foraging Areas for woodstorks, to name just a few. Preservation of these species should be a top priority. The increased traffic, noise, and human presence will disturb and drive them away from foraging areas and primary habitat. Smaller creatures, such as the Eastern Indigo snake, burrowing owl, and gopher turtle will be more severely impacted since the construction machines and vibrations could easily collapse their burrows and fragment their habitat. Nature has a right to live undisturbed, especially in and near state and federal lands, set aside for their protection.

- **The proposed resolution would Foster Use of Existing Everglades Access Points.** Six state and federal parks along the ROGG corridor already provide a vast array of existing recreational opportunities—including countless bike paths, boardwalks, camping facilities, paddle outs, swamp walks, observation towers, ORV trails, and interpretative programs for visitors—at no additional cost or impact to the wetlands, wildlife, and people who live here.

- **Please vote YES to rescind support of ROGG and remove it from the Map.**