

MIAMI BEACH

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NO. LTC #

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Dan Gelber and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

Eric Carpenter for

DATE: July 2, 2019

SUBJECT: **On-going Water Quality Coordination with Miami-Dade County**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission is to provide an update on the city's on-going coordination with Miami-Dade County regarding water quality.

Staff from the City Manager's Office, the Environment and Sustainability Department, and the Public Works Department have been holding regular coordination meetings with Miami-Dade County Division of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) leadership since 2016. The purpose of these meetings is to increase communication between the two agencies and allow county and city staff to proactively address potential issues through high-level coordination. One of the discussion items on the monthly meeting agendas relates to protecting and improving water quality.

The city reduces potential pollution through a combination of education and outreach, good housekeeping, as well as the use of cutting-edge technology and industry-vetted operational practices. The city's stormwater management program focuses heavily on preventing pollution at its source: people. It is easier and less expensive for each person to do their part by picking up after their pets, tossing trash into designated bins, and properly applying landscape maintenance chemicals than to capture and remove pollutants in larger concentrations from within the stormwater system. Nevertheless, the city plays an important role in protecting water quality and has a well-rounded strategy to remove pollutants outside and inside the stormwater system before they reach Biscayne Bay.

On Thursday, April 25, interdepartmental staff met with DERM leadership to discuss water quality and talk through the city's plans to improve upon our current efforts. The city began by highlighting the progress we have made over the last five years to improve water quality, including:

- In science, such as the voluntary launch of a municipal water quality sampling program with over 60 stations;
- In design, such as the modification of pumped outfall designs to include dissipator boxes that reduce discharge velocities from those approved in the city's first new generation pump stations;
- In operations, such as increasing stormwater system maintenance from once every three years to once every year;
- In policy, such as the citywide bans on polystyrene and plastic straws; and,
- In compliance, such as the creation of the city's environmental inspection programs to reduce sanitary sewer overflows and construction run-off.

During the meeting, DERM and city staff identified 24 action items to take our stormwater management program to the next level. These actions include:

- Better educating residents on how the stormwater system works and providing guidelines for protecting water quality at home;
- Meeting with utilities that operate within our city to outline on-going challenges from emergency and maintenance dewatering operations to our stormwater system;
- Coordinating more regularly with DERM on our water quality sampling program to ensure consistent expectations and interpretation of results;
- Training public and private contractors on stormwater and environmental permitting compliance;
- Developing and implementing a plan to address scouring at select outfalls with recurring turbidity concerns;
- Bring all permits up-to-date by filing modifications or providing the necessary close-out documentation; and,
- Continue two-way coordination regarding polices, practices, and data-gathering.

As of June 30, nine of these actions have been completed, nine are in progress and six are pending. We will continue to modify our program based on the best-available science, technology and strategies available for stormwater management and will provide regular updates as additional steps are taken.

Should you have any questions regarding the on-going coordination with DERM, please contact Elizabeth Wheaton, Environment & Sustainability Director, at x26121. For questions regarding the city's stormwater system design, operations and maintenance, please contact Roy Coley, Public Works Director, at x27380.

ETC/SMT/RWC/ESW/MKW