

RESOLUTION 2013-7

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF ST. LUCIE VILLAGE, FLORIDA, REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, THROUGH EXECUTIVE ORDER AND/OR OTHER POWERS AVAILABLE UNDER THE LAW, TO ACTIVATE ALL AVAILABLE STATE AND LOCAL EMERGENCY AND RELIEF RESOURCES AND MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE INDIAN RIVER LAGOON AND ST. LUCIE ESTUARY.

WHEREAS, the Indian River Lagoon is a diverse, shallow-water estuary stretching across 40 percent of Florida's east coast; and

WHEREAS, the Lagoon is an important commercial and recreational fishery and economic resource to the state and region. The total estimated annual economic value of the lagoon is \$3.7 billion, supporting 15,000 full and part-time jobs and providing recreational opportunities for 11 million people per year; and

WHEREAS, the St. Lucie River and Estuary is an ecological jewel on Florida's Treasure Coast that is integral to the environmental and economic well-being of Martin and St. Lucie Counties. The St. Lucie River is part of the larger Indian River Lagoon system, the most diverse estuarine environment in North America with more than 4,000 plant and animal species, including manatees, oysters, dolphins, sea turtles and seahorses; and

WHEREAS, extensive historical modifications to the St. Lucie River and its watershed have altered the hydrology of the region and as a result, heavy rainfall can bring large influxes of fresh water into the St. Lucie Estuary from storm water runoff within the basin, Lake Okeechobee releases or both. The increased freshwater flows affect salinity levels and water quality in the estuary, potentially causing environmental harm; and

WHEREAS, this runoff is causing a public health threat as microcystis aeruginosa, a single-celled blue green alga, or cyanobacterium, has proliferated in the Lagoon to form dense

blooms, which produce multiple toxins, including liver toxins, as well as, neurotoxins; and

WHEREAS, 47,000 acres of sea grass have been killed to date in the Indian River Lagoon since 2010, which far exceeds any documented or remembered events in terms of geographic scale, bloom intensity and duration. It is alarming because sea grass is an indicator of the lagoon's health, a food source for manatees and a nursery, refuge and a place of forage for a variety of fish and other marine life; and

WHEREAS, fresh water discharges are killing sea life - 280 Manatees, 60 Bottlenose Dolphins and 250 Brown Pelicans have died in the Indian River since 2010; and

WHEREAS, the Lagoon is at a turning point. The coming months could herald a slow recovery of this unique ecosystem or an imminent collapse of the remaining portion of the estuary that has been sustainable up to this point; and

WHEREAS, this Board requests that the Governor declare an emergency so that the Counties and/or municipalities can proceed to seek direct assistance with any and all agencies of the State of Florida as may be needed to meet this emergency.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF ST. LUCIE VILLAGE, FLORIDA HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Town of St. Lucie Village requests that the Governor of the State of Florida consider issuing an Executive Order, and/or other powers available under law, to activate all available State and Local emergency and relief resources and mechanisms to protect the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie Estuary.

2. The Town Attorney shall forward this Resolution to the Governor of the State of Florida, the County's State and Federal legislative delegation, the St. Lucie County Commission, and the St. Lucie County and Martin County Administrators.

3. This Resolution shall become effective upon passage.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of St.

Lucie Village on this 17th day of September, 2013.

APPROVED:

BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF
ST. LUCIE VILLAGE, FLORIDA

By: William G. Thiess
William G. Thiess, Mayor

ATTESTED:

By: Diane C. Orme
Diane C. Orme, Clerk

I, DIANE C. ORME, Clerk of the TOWN OF ST. LUCIE VILLAGE, FLORIDA, do hereby certify that this is a true and accurate copy of Resolution **2013-7** which was duly introduced, read and adopted at the regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen of the TOWN OF ST. LUCIE VILLAGE, FLORIDA, held this 17th day of September, 2013.

Diane C. Orme
DIANE C. ORME, CLERK