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November 30, 2022

The Honorable Senator Kathleen Passidomo  
The Honorable Representative Bob Rommel  
The Honorable Representative Lauren Melo  
The Honorable Representative Adam Botana

**Re: 2023 Legislative Session  
Immokalee Water & Sewer District Appropriations Requests**

Dear Collier County Legislative Delegation:

The Immokalee Water & Sewer District (District) is rolling out a bold plan of process improvements for the Immokalee community. Everything we do as a District is tied back to our vision, *Excellence in Quality & Service*, and Core Values. The District is seeking funding champions from this delegation and the Florida Legislature.

The District is seeking a total of **\$26,000,000** in appropriations for the following improvements:

1. Water Softening Treatment – Three (3) Water Treatment Plants.....\$ 9,000,000
2. Immokalee Smart Utility – Water & Wastewater Implementation.....\$ 7,000,000
3. Reuse/Reclaimed Water Treatment – Wastewater Treatment Plant...\$10,000,000

**Water Softening Treatment** will significantly improve the hardness, iron, and manganese in the District's drinking water. This has been a continual issue for the community as it stains fixtures, calcium scaling builds up on fixtures, discolors the drinking water, and requires more energy for distribution. Water softening is the most economical option currently available. Additionally, this improvement will allow the District to convert to an efficient treatment process that will produce chemical cost savings.

**Immokalee Smart Utility** is an integrated smart system based on the principles of the Internet of Things (IoT) being designed and scaled for implementation in both water and wastewater systems across Immokalee. The benefits for the District include:

WATER – data collection in real time, wellfield monitoring, Water Treatment Plant optimization, automating water quality monitoring and water loss (leakages) in the water distribution system.

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WASTEWATER - integrated manhole monitoring will give the District the visibility to efficiently manage day-to-day processes, provide information for pre-, during, and post-storm events, early detection of conditions to prevent Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs), Inflow & Infiltration sources (excessive stormwater), and if necessary, engage the public regarding public health concerns. The project will also reduce any potential wastewater footprint to the surrounding ecosystem, including Lake Trafford.

The benefits for the District's customers include personal consumer insight, real time data for managing accounts and usage, early leak detection, mobile platform for customer communications, more transparency in operations, and water conservation.

**Reuse/Reclaimed Water Treatment** allows the District to market reuse water for irrigation of residential and non-residential uses. The District will be able to transition away from using a sprayfield as our emergency underground injection control system to utilizing an alternative water source, which expands the water pie. In addition, the project includes lining the holding ponds for added environmental benefits. There is an increasing demand for the District to provide reuse and the improvements include higher level treatment and disinfectant to meet the standard for reuse.

The Immokalee community is truly unique in its diverse population and driven spirit. The community is primarily agrarian, and the population works in the fields or in a supportive industry. Almost all the residential development in Immokalee is non-profit, and the community cannot absorb rate increases like other areas within the region if the District were to fund the improvements ourselves or through a loan program.

While the District continues to apply for grants and other funding sources (with no match) from state agencies, it appears that the unique status of Immokalee is not taken into consideration as a priority for funding.

The supporting documentation illustrates how the District is moving forward strategically with purpose and understanding. If we continue to strive for "excellence" in our "quality and service," we will not only meet the needs of our community, customers, and natural systems, but we will develop an organization that is known as top in the field of water and sewer service.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Sarah Catala  
Executive Director  
Immokalee Water and Sewer District

cc: Joseph Brister, Chair, Immokalee Water & Sewer District  
Laura Donaldson, District Attorney, Manson, Bolves, Donaldson, & Tanner

Attachments:  
IWSD Strategic Report & Development  
Water Softening & Reuse Presentation  
IWSD Smart Utility Presentation

