



THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR BILL GALVANO
President

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators
FROM: Bill Galvano
SUBJECT: Innovation in Infrastructure
DATE: January 30, 2019

At my designation ceremony and again during the Organization Session, I expressed my belief that the Senate should lead in developing innovative approaches to enhancing Florida's infrastructure. We have a responsibility to not only meet today's needs, but also to anticipate tomorrow's demands, including a focus on revitalizing historic rural Florida communities. As we approach the regular session, I would like to provide some additional thoughts on this important issue for your consideration.

In my view, infrastructure is more than traditional transportation elements including roads, bridges, seaports and airports. Infrastructure also includes utility and communication resources that provide access to clean water and reliable broadband connectivity. Our experience with hurricanes has taught us how intrinsically linked infrastructure is to security, preparation, and recovery, from evacuation routes to speedy restoration of cellular service and electrical power.

To facilitate an innovative, holistic view of the importance of hardening our existing infrastructure, as well as anticipating future needs, the scope of the former Committee on Transportation was expanded to include all matters related to infrastructure and security. President Lee was appointed to Chair the new Committee on Infrastructure and Security.

In the past, much of Florida's infrastructure funding has primarily been focused on Florida's urban areas in order to improve safety, relieve congestion, create mobility, and to promote commerce and tourism. While this funding has improved access and created economic growth for our urban areas along our coasts and in Central Florida, there has not always been the same focus on large portions of rural Florida.

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Over the years, I have had the opportunity to discuss with each of you our shared concerns regarding the economic challenges facing Florida's rural communities. These legacy communities are the backbone of our state and have powered its economy for generations. In recent years, these vital communities have suffered from impacts to farming, resulting in an exodus and loss of local rural economies. Florida's success cannot depend solely on the perimeter of our state. We must work together to sustain these historic rural communities.

To this end, I have asked President Lee to lead his committee in developing legislation to expedite the creation of three new multi-use corridors in our rural areas of regional economic significance.

- Polk County to Collier County
- Suncoast Parkway Extension to Georgia
- Northern Turnpike Connector (Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway)

These extensions of our existing infrastructure have been under consideration by the Department of Transportation and advocated by leaders of business and industry for many years. The time has come to prioritize these critical infrastructure enhancements and to combine those efforts with innovations that enhance surrounding communities, while providing new opportunities for job creation.

I am confident these new infrastructure corridors will help achieve Florida's goal of strategically planning for future population growth, while at the same time revitalizing rural communities and enhancing public safety. In my view, the benefits of this type of long-term investment in our infrastructure include regional connectivity that enhances trade and tourism, congestion mitigation and evacuation routes, as well as broadband, water, and sewer connectivity that helps preserve our natural resources while improving quality of life for residents in rural areas of our state.

Recent estimates tell us Florida is gaining over 850 people a day and will continue to gain population at this rate for the next several years. That means we are seeing our population increase by the size of the city of Orlando every year. Florida needs to be ready, and our rural communities are a key to our success.