

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2017

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA IN SUPPORT OF THE EXPLORATION OF A TOLL INTO THE FLORIDA KEYS FOR NON-RESIDENTS TO OFFSET TOURIST IMPACT, PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF WATER QUALITY AND TO SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TO MITIGATE AGAINST RISING SEA LEVEL.

WHEREAS, Monroe County and the Florida Keys is an extremely popular tourist destination, with approximately 80% of visitors entering the Florida Keys by via U.S. Highway 1¹; and

WHEREAS, the percent of those driving into the Florida Keys with a personal vehicle has increased by 12.8% from 2015 to 2016²; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County's US-1 has earned an All-American Road Status; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County is home to two (2) National Parks, seven (7) Florida State Parks (including Keys Overseas Heritage Trail), four (4) Wildlife Sanctuaries and a National Marine Sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County recognizes the importance of and supports maintaining a quality destination to ensure and protect its environmental and economic health; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County has experienced a measurable increase in tidal flooding and is considered ground zero for experiencing the destructive impacts of global climate change and sea level rise; and

WHEREAS, at least 24 of the 27 bridges Monroe County maintains are scheduled for repair or replacement within the next 10 years³; and

WHEREAS, at least 22.5% of the Monroe County maintained roadways are rated as "poor" or "very poor", meaning these roadways have failed or are past their optimal point requiring progressive rehabilitation⁴; and

¹ 2016 TDC Visitor Profile Survey (January – December 2015/2016) (based on survey sample size 3600)

² Ibid.

³ Bridge Assessment Report, Kisinger Campo & Associates, Corp., September 2014

⁴ Monroe County, Florida Pavement Management Analysis Report, IMS Infrastructure Services, February 2014

WHEREAS, many of the bridges are the sole conduit for the fresh water lines from the mainland aquifer; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County recognizes the vital importance of tourism to all municipalities and unincorporated areas of the Florida Keys and believes tourists can contribute to reserving the destination by alleviating the negative impacts of the vibrant tourist-based economy; and

WHEREAS, tolls have been collected along the Overseas Highway twice in its history (1927 ferry boat from No Name Key to Key West and the 1938 Lower Matecumbe); and

WHEREAS, since 1926 Monroe County has operated and continues to operate a toll on Card Sound Road; and

WHEREAS, there is some precedent⁵ in Florida for using funds derived from tolls for non-transportation purposes;

WHEREAS, the Village of Islamorada has adopted resolution 17-04-30, which asks the four other municipalities in the Florida Keys and the County to jointly support a feasibility study for establishing “US-1 toll lanes coming into the Florida Keys to assist in funding transportation improvements, water quality improvements, and other pressing needs within the Florida Keys.”

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA:

1. The Board supports the exploration of a feasibility study for establishing toll lanes on U.S. 1 coming into the Florida Keys for non-residents to offset tourist impacts, for the protection and improvement of water quality, to support infrastructure investment as mitigation against global climate change and sea level rise, and for other pressing needs within the Florida Keys.
2. Staff is authorized to work with the municipalities and to expend county resources in support of this endeavor.

⁵ See, e.g., F.S. 338.26(3)(b), entitled Alligator Alley Toll Road, which allows toll funds to be used for such non-transportation related projects as water conveyance projects, sewer plant engineering design plans, land acquisition, and other Everglades construction projects.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida at a regular meeting held on the 21st day of June, 2017.

Mayor George Neugent _____
Mayor Pro Tem David Rice _____
Commissioner Danny Kolhage _____
Commissioner Heather Carruthers _____
Commissioner Sylvia Murphy _____

(SEAL)
Attest: KEVIN MADOK, CLERK

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

BY: _____
Deputy Clerk

BY: _____
Mayor

**MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

ROBERT B. SHILLINGER, JR.
COUNTY ATTORNEY
Date 6-6-17