



## THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

**COMMITTEES:**  
Health Policy, *Chair*  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Health  
and Human Services, *Vice Chair*  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal  
and Civil Justice  
Children, Families, and Elder Affairs  
Military and Veterans Affairs and Space

**JOINT COMMITTEE:**  
Joint Committee on Public Counsel Oversight

**SENATOR GAYLE HARRELL**  
25th District

September 18, 2019

Governor Ron DeSantis  
Office of the Governor  
State of Florida  
Plaza Level 05 The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer  
Plaza Level 11 The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0301

Attorney General Ashley Moody  
Office of the Attorney General  
State of Florida  
Plaza Level 01 The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050

Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried  
FL Department of Agriculture and Consumer  
Services  
Plaza Level 10 The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

Dear Governor DeSantis, CFO Patronis, Attorney General Moody & Commissioner Fried,

While I am unable to attend the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2019, I would like express my strong opposition to the proposed creation of the Harmony Ranch Community Development District in Martin County.

There is broad opposition in Martin County to the proposed CDD. The Town of Jupiter Island, the City of Stuart, the Town of Ocean Breeze, the Village of Indiantown, and the Town of Sewall's Point, every municipality in Martin County, have each adopted resolutions opposing approval of the CDD. Over 4000 Martin County residents have signed petitions opposing the Harmony CDD. 1,000 Friends of Florida also opposed the CDD.

Of importance to my constituents is that Martin County's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (the Plan) has established a Primary Urban Services Districts (PUSD). One of the purposes of the PUSD is to limit urban sprawl. The establishment of the PUSD also protects agricultural enterprises, watersheds and natural lands. On six previous occasions, the Martin County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) has made the legislative determination that Harmony Ranch's proposal to expand the PUSD so that urban services can be delivered to its property is not consistent with the Plan.

**REPLY TO:**

- 215 SW Federal Highway, Suite 203, Stuart, Florida 34994 (772) 221-4019
- 310 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5025

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**BILL GALVANO**  
President of the Senate

**DAVID SIMMONS**  
President Pro Tempore

September 18, 2019

Page 2

Given the BCC's denials, it is clear that the creation of a CDD would not be the best alternative to deliver community development services and facilities to 129 homes because the Petition is directly contrary to the BCC's legislative decisions regarding the appropriateness of the delivery of community development services and facilities to property which is far removed from the County's PUSD.

Although, there have been many CDDs established in St. Lucie County, as yet none have been established in Martin County. I believe this reflects the fundamental difference in growth policy between the two counties. The growth policy of these two counties is a historical decision by each elected county commission.

I must note that in my opinion, the establishment of special taxing districts, such as CDDs in St. Lucie County have not served my constituents well. Once established, the property owners become responsible for paying for the community development services that are sought by a developer controlled governing board. Many of my constituents have told me that they were surprised to learn that they were paying assessments to support growth promoted by the developer and creator of the CDD in which they reside. My constituents' disappointment and frustration is also fueled by the fact that they are paying taxes and assessments to yet another layer of government and that they have little recourse in challenging these added taxes because the CDD is controlled by a developer.

I respectfully request that the FLWAC deny the Petition.

Very truly yours,



Senator Gayle B. Harrell  
District 25