

**PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: September 16, 2025 ☒ Consent ☐ Regular
 ☐ Ordinance ☐ Public Hearing

Department: Intergovernmental Affairs

Submitted By: Administration

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to approve: A Resolution urging the Florida Legislature to appropriate funding for the Florida Rail Enterprise Program to fund the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority's (SFRTA) Tri-Rail operations to maintain Tri-Rail's level of service; urging the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to include such funding, as it may be necessary, in the appropriate current and future FDOT five (5)-year work program.

Summary: Palm Beach, Miami-Dade and Broward Counties currently provide operation and maintenance funding in the combined amount of \$11.7 million for Tri-Trail. On June 30, 2025, Governor DeSantis signed into law HB 7031, approving a \$1.3 billion tax package that includes significant changes impacting state and local funding for transit that revises the distribution from documentary stamp tax revenues to eliminate the Florida Rail Enterprise programs. This funding reduction will have a significant financial impact on the SFRTA operation and could threaten the long-term stability and continuity of the operation. The Resolution urges the Florida Legislature to take appropriate action to restore funding eliminated in the 2025 Legislative Session to ensure the continuity of Tri-Rail operations. Countywide (MM)

Background and Justification: At the August 26, 2025 Workshop meeting of the BCC, staff was directed, among several other strategies, to work with the Florida Legislature to restore funding for Tri-Rail that was eliminated during the 2025 Legislative Session. Subsequently, Miami-Dade County has passed a similar Resolution supporting that directive and Broward County has a similar Resolution pending for consideration before their Board.

Attachments:

- ## 1. Resolution

Recommended by: N/A
 Department Director Date

Approved By: _____
Chief Deputy County Administrator

Date: 9/15/25

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs					
External Revenues					
Program Income(County)					
In-Kind Match(County)					
NET FISCAL IMPACT					
#ADDITIONAL FTE					
POSITIONS (CUMULATIVE)					

Is item included in Current Budget? Yes ☐ No ☒
Is this item using Federal Funds? Yes ☐ No ☒
Is this item using State Funds? Yes ☐ No ☒

Budget Account No.: Fund ____ Department ____ Unit ____ Object ____

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:
N/A

C. Departmental Fiscal Review:

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

ASDUA 9/12/25
OFMB *JA 9/12*
EW 9-12

OS 9/12/25
Brenda Zarachko
Contract Dev. and Control

B. Legal Sufficiency:

RM 9/12/25
Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

Department Director

Resolution No. 2025-

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR THE FLORIDA RAIL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM TO FUND THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY'S TRI-RAIL OPERATIONS TO MAINTAIN TRI-RAIL'S LEVEL OF SERVICE; URGING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) TO INCLUDE SUCH FUNDING, AS IT MAY BE NECESSARY, IN THE APPROPRIATE CURRENT AND FUTURE FDOT FIVE-YEAR WORK PROGRAMS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, safe, efficient, and connected public transportation is a cornerstone of a successful metropolitan region, supporting economic growth, sustainability, and a high quality of life for residents; and

WHEREAS, South Florida has made progress toward becoming a competitive global metro area, with planned investments in regional mobility playing a key role in that transformation; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida region continues to grow in population, increasing the need for improved rail transit options; and

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2025, Governor DeSantis signed HB 7031 into law, approving a \$1.3 billion tax package that includes significant changes impacting state and local funding for transit; and

WHEREAS, HB 7031 includes a provision that revises the distribution from documentary stamp tax revenues to eliminate the Florida Rail Enterprise programs; and

WHEREAS, the elimination of the funding distribution for the Florida Rail Enterprise program has a significant negative financial impact on the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA)'s operation of the commuter rail service known as Tri-Rail; and

WHEREAS, Tri-Rail operates along 72 miles of the South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC) and eight miles of the Florida East Coast Railway (FECR) in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties; and

WHEREAS, Tri-Rail achieved an all-time ridership record in Fiscal Year 2024-2025, carrying over 4.5 million passengers, demonstrating strong demand and the critical role of commuter rail in South Florida's transportation network; and

WHEREAS, despite this unprecedented ridership, Tri-Rail faces significant financial challenges due to recent reductions in state operational funding, which threaten the long-term stability and continuity of the service; and

WHEREAS, these changes create funding uncertainties for the SFRTA, which may affect its ability to engage in long-term planning and contractual commitments necessary to support reliable commuter rail service; and

WHEREAS, this threatens the availability and reliability of a vital regional transit option, likely forcing thousands of commuters to shift to personal vehicles, which could significantly increase traffic congestion on Interstate 95 (I-95) and the Florida Turnpike, and exacerbate commuter delays; and

WHEREAS, this shift in funding approach could also create challenges in identifying a sustainable long-term funding solution that meets the financial and operational needs of SFRTA's regional rail network; and

WHEREAS, changes to state funding structures may also have secondary impacts on related transit initiatives where coordination is required around shared assets such as rolling stock, infrastructure, and service planning; and

WHEREAS, without sustained and predictable investment, it may become more difficult for SFRTA to maintain current service levels, pursue future improvements, or meet certain federal program requirements, which could affect the broader stability of the regional transit system; and

WHEREAS, SFRTA plays a critical role in serving the public by providing a safe, affordable, and accessible regional transportation option that thousands of residents, workers, and visitors rely on each day to commute across Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties; and

WHEREAS, Tri-Rail has utilized reserves and implemented operational efficiencies, including lowering administrative costs below state averages, but these measures are insufficient to close an existing \$30 million budget deficit, emphasizing the need for dedicated, sustainable funding sources; and

WHEREAS, the state's recent actions walk back a commitment made in prior years to invest in regional mobility solutions; and

WHEREAS, SFRTA has engaged in long-term efforts and multiple studies with state and local partners for nearly two decades to secure a stable funding mechanism, underscoring the urgency of legislative and fiscal action to preserve and grow this vital regional transit service; and

WHEREAS, these changes shift the burden of funding major infrastructure to local governments, many of which are already facing significant fiscal constraints; and

WHEREAS, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) desires that the state provide critically needed assistance for this essential transit service,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, that:

Section 1. The foregoing "Whereas" clauses are true and correct and are made part of this Resolution.

Section 2. The Board of County Commissioners supports this Resolution.

Section 3. The Board urges the Florida Legislature to appropriate funding for the Florida Rail Enterprise Program to fund South Florida Regional Transportation Authority's Tri-Rail operations to maintain Tri-Rail's level of service, and further urges the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to include such funding, as it may be necessary, in the appropriate current and future FDOT Five-Year Work Programs.

Section 4. The Board directs the Palm Beach County Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and Community Engagement to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, the Senate President, the House Speaker, the Chair and Members of the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, the District Four Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, and the Executive Director of the Palm Beach County Transportation Planning Agency.

Section 5. The Board directs the County's Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and Community Engagement to advocate for the action described above, and authorizes and directs that Department to include this item in the 2026 State Legislative Agenda when it is presented to the BCC.

Section 6. SEVERABILITY. If any portion of the Resolution is determined by any court to be invalid, the invalid portion shall be stricken, and such striking shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this Resolution. If any court determines that this Resolution, or any portion hereof, cannot be legally applied to any individual(s), group(s), entity(ies), property(ies), or circumstance(s), such determination shall not affect the applicability hereof to any other individual, group, entity, property, or circumstance.

Section 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by _____, and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Commissioner Maria G. Marino, Mayor	-	_____
Commissioner Sara Baxter, Vice Mayor	-	_____
Commissioner Gregg K. Weiss	-	_____
Commissioner Joel G. Flores	-	_____
Commissioner Marci Woodward	-	_____
Commissioner Maria Sachs	-	_____
Commissioner Bobby Powell Jr.	-	_____

The Mayor thereupon declared the Resolution duly passed and adopted this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Palm Beach County, Florida by its
Board of County Commissioners

Michael A. Caruso, Clerk & Comptroller

BY: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved as to Form and
Legal Sufficiency

By: 
Assistant County Attorney