



## **2024 Review of Advisory Bodies**

**Florida Department of Environmental Protection**  
**August 15, 2024**



# 2024 REVIEW OF ADVISORY BODIES

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## **Overview**

Chapter 2024-87, Laws of Florida, requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to upload a report by August 15 annually to the Florida Fiscal Portal. The report must identify the statutory authority for the advisory body, the purpose or objective of the advisory body, the information regarding the advisory body’s membership, a list of the meeting dates and times for the preceding three fiscal years, a summary of the work plan for the current fiscal year and next two fiscal years, the amount of funds appropriated and staff time used each fiscal year, and a recommendation by the agency on whether to continue, terminate, or modify each advisory body.

## **Biscayne Bay Commission**

### ***Statutory Authority***

The Biscayne Bay Commission was established pursuant to section 20.03, Florida Statutes.

### ***Purpose of the Advisory Body***

The Biscayne Bay Commission, through a deliberative and transparent process, ensures that objective and sound science is used to inform decision-making regarding the bay. Input from the commission is used to support key funding and restoration initiatives and guide regulatory changes that are needed to improve water quality.

### ***Commission Membership***

The Biscayne Bay Commission is comprised of 9 members, details of which are provided in the table below.

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>APPOINTING AUTHORITY</b>	<b>FILLED/ VACANT</b>	<b>TERM</b>	<b>VACANCY DATE</b>
Noah Valenstein	Executive Office of the Governor	1/1/2022	4 years	1/1/2026
Micky Steinberg	Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners	1/1/2022	4 years	1/1/2026
Kevin Marino Cabrera		1/1/2022	4 years	1/1/2026
Danielle Cohen Higgins		1/1/2022	4 years	1/1/2026
Tim Meerbott	Nominated by the Miami-Dade County League of Cities and appointed by the Secretary of Environmental Protection.	1/1/2022	4 years	1/1/2026
Scott Wagner	South Florida Water Management District Governing Board	1/1/2024	2 years	1/1/2028
Adam Blalock	Department of Environmental Protection	1/1/2024	2 years	1/1/2028
Dr. Thomas Reinert	Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,	1/1/2024	2 years	1/1/2028
Spencer Crowley	Florida Inland Navigational District	1/1/2024	2 years	1/1/2028

### **Commission Meetings**

The table below is a list of meeting dates and times for the Biscayne Bay Commission for the preceding three fiscal years.

<b>FISCAL YEAR 2023-24</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
September 7, 2023	9 a.m.
January 19, 2024	9 a.m.
April 17, 2024	9 a.m.
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2022-23</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
July 27, 2022	9 a.m.
November 30, 2022	9 a.m.
February 15, 2023	9 a.m.
April 26, 2023	9 a.m.
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2021-22</b>	
January 4, 2022	1 p.m.
April 8, 2022	9 a.m.

### **Summary of Commission’s Workplan**

The Biscayne Bay Commission is tasked with adopting a Strategic Plan, for the purpose of improving Biscayne Bay and the surrounding areas. It is meant to address environmental, economic, social, recreational, and aesthetic issues. The first Strategic Plan focuses on water quality and natural system restoration and is intended to be paired with initiatives prioritized by the Biscayne Bay Task Force, which was developed by Miami-Dade County. Included is the [Semiannual Report](#), containing the Biscayne Bay Commission’s Project Tracker.

### **Appropriated Funds and Staff Time to Support Advisory Body**

The Biscayne Bay Commission is supported by one full-time contractor position. The Southeast Aquatic Preserve Manager, the Southeast Regional Administrator, and the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve Manager are FTE positions that also devote time to the commission. Involvement from these positions is generally minimal and focuses on preparing for meetings, attending them, and occasionally presenting to the commission. Additionally, one Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve OPS position attends meetings, prepares outreach materials, and checks participants in at the entrance.

### **Agency Recommendation**

DEP recommends that the Biscayne Bay Commission be continued. The rationale for continuing the Biscayne Bay Commission is that it provides much needed leadership to the Biscayne Bay community. In the past years the commission has been able to bring together researchers and government officials to foster conversation and guide the restoration process. The commission is necessary to ensure that Biscayne Bay restoration efforts progress.

## Seagrass Restoration Initiative Technology Advisory Council

### *Statutory Authority*

The Initiative Technology Advisory Council was established pursuant to section 403.9344(4), Florida Statutes.

### *Purpose of the Advisory Body*

The Florida Legislature and Governor, in recognizing the need for innovative seagrass research to guide coastal restoration, passed the Seagrass Restoration Technology Development Initiative. The intent of the Legislation is to establish a public/private partnership of research entities to develop restoration technologies and approaches to address the loss of seagrass and cascading ecological and economic impacts of that loss to communities across Florida. The goal of the Initiative is to develop, test, and implement innovative, effective, cost-efficient, and environmentally sustainable technologies and approaches for restoring coastal seagrass ecosystems. The Advisory Council will provide guidance and oversight for the Initiative.

### *Advisory Body's Membership*

The Initiative Technology Advisory Council is comprised of 7 members, details of which are provided in the table below.

MEMBER	APPOINTING AUTHORITY	FILLED/ VACANT	TERM	VACANCY DATE
Dr. Michael P. Crosby	Mote Marine Laboratory	Filled	2 years	-
Dr. Laura Reynolds	University of Florida	Filled	2 years	-
Beau Williams	Executive Office of the Governor	Filled	2 years	2/1/2027
Dr. James Douglas	President of the Senate	Filled	2 years	2/1/2027
Carter Henne	Speaker of the House of Representatives	Filled	2 years	2/1/2026
Scott Eastman	Secretary of Environmental Protection	Filled	2 years	2/1/2027
Dr. Bradley Furman	Fish and Wildlife Conservation commission	Filled	2 years	2/1/2026

### *Advisory Body's Meetings*

The table below is a list of meeting dates and times for the Initiative Technology Advisory Council for the preceding three fiscal years.

FISCAL YEAR 2023-24	
Date	Time
February 16,2024	9 a.m.

### ***Summary of Advisory Body's Workplan***

The Initiative legislation requires that, beginning January 15, 2024 and each January 15 thereafter until expiration, the Initiative shall submit an Annual Report that contains an overview of its accomplishments to date. The legislation also required that the Advisory Council create a 10-year Florida Seagrass Restoration Plan to implement tools and technologies developed under this initiative, in collaboration with the Florida Aquatic Preserve Program, Mote Marine Laboratory and the University of Florida. This Plan is currently in development and will consider the Initiative Objectives below:

- (1) Develop and operate a seagrass research nursery with various statewide seagrass populations at Mote's Aquaculture Research Park for this Initiative. Develop and grow partnerships to establish additional seagrass nurseries across the state to further this Initiative's research goals.
- (2) Test the resilience of different statewide seagrass populations to multiple environmental stressors in controlled lab and nursery settings to determine the most genetically resilient seagrass. Collaborate with coastal restoration practitioners to develop sustainable sources of the resilient seagrass.
- (3) Develop and maintain a genetic library of Florida seagrass to utilize statewide restoration efforts.
- (4) Facilitate engagement with other pertinent marine science and technology development organizations to pursue applied research and technology for the successful restoration of seagrass ecosystems.
- (5) In collaboration with the Florida Aquatic Preserve Program, Mote and the University of Florida shall create a 10-year Florida Seagrass Restoration Plan to implement tools and technologies developed under the Initiative.
- (6) Leverage state-appropriated funds with additional funds from private and federal sources to further the goals of the Initiative.

### ***Appropriated Funds and Staff Time to Support Advisory Body***

An annual recurring appropriation of \$2,000,000 was provided for Mote Marine for the Initiative. No other Department funds are being expended for the Advisory Council. Five staff members from the Aquatic Preserve program have dedicated three hours each in FY 2023-24 to support the Initiative Technology Advisory Council.

### ***Agency Recommendation***

DEP recommends that the Advisory Council be continued. By statute, the Initiative Technology Advisory Council will expire on June 30, 2028, when the Initiative is complete.

## **Overview**

Chapter 2024-87, Laws of Florida, requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to upload a report by August 15 annually to the Transparency Florida website. The report must identify the statutory authority for the advisory body, the purpose or objective of the advisory body, the information regarding the advisory body’s membership, a list of the meeting dates and times for the preceding three fiscal years, a summary of the work plan for the current fiscal year and next two fiscal years, the amount of funds appropriated and staff time used each fiscal year, and a recommendation by the agency on whether to continue, terminate or modify each advisory body.

## **Florida Greenways and Trails Council**

### ***Statutory Authority***

The Florida Greenways and Trails Council was established pursuant to section 260.0142, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

### ***Purpose of the Advisory Body***

The Florida Greenways and Trails Council serves to advise DEP on greenway and trail related issues, promote intergovernmental cooperation and private partnerships for developing the greenways and trails system, recommend priorities for critical links in the system, and provide funding recommendations for developing and managing the system.

### ***Advisory Body Membership***

The Florida Greenways and Trails Council is comprised of 21 members, details of which are provided in the table below.

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>APPOINTING AUTHORITY</b>	<b>FILLED/ VACANT</b>	<b>TERM</b>	<b>VACANCY DATE</b>
Mike Stephens	Governor	Filled	Two years	N/A
Scott Stryker	Governor	Filled	Two years	N/A
Stephanie Wardein	Governor	Filled	Two years	N/A
Paul “PJ” Marinelli	Governor	Filled	Two years	N/A
Karl Rasmussen	Governor	Filled	Two years	N/A
Morgan Wilbanks	Governor	Filled	Two years	N/A
Andy Gardiner	Senate President	Filled	Two years	N/A
Jason Lauritsen	Senate President	Filled	Two years	N/A
Dale Allen	Senate President	Filled	Two years	N/A
James Buchanan	House Speaker	Filled	Two years	N/A
Cyndi Stevenson	House Speaker	Filled	Two years	N/A
Traci Deen	House Speaker	Filled	Two years	N/A
Danielle Terrell	Secretary, DEP	Filled	Two years	N/A
Katherine Burke	Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Filled	Two years	N/A
Robin Birdsong	Secretary, Department of Transportation	Filled	Two years	N/A
Vincent Birdsong	Director, Division of Historical Resources	Filled	Two years	N/A
Brooks White	Director, Florida Forest Service	Filled	Two years	N/A
Edwin McCook	Water management districts	Filled	Two years	N/A
Shawn Thomas	Federal land managing agency	Filled	Two years	N/A
Chris Rietow	Secretary, DEP	Filled	Two years	N/A

Jim Couillard	Secretary, DEP	Filled	Two years	N/A
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**Advisory Body Meetings**

The table below is a list of meeting dates and times for the Florida Greenways and Trails Council for the preceding three fiscal years.

FISCAL YEAR 2023-24	
Date	Time
Aug. 22 – 23, 2023	9 a.m.
Dec. 6 – 7, 2023	9 a.m.
March 27 – 28, 2024	9 a.m.
June 25, 2024	9 a.m.
FISCAL YEAR 2022-23	
Date	Time
April 13 – 14, 2023	9 a.m.
Dec. 6 – 7, 2022	9 a.m.
FISCAL YEAR 2021-22	
Oct. 21 – 22, 2021	1 p.m.
April 6 – 7, 2022	9 a.m.

**Summary of Advisory Body’s Workplan**

[The 2024 – 2028 Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan](#) outlines the vision for the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS) both on land and water. It defines the role of the system in advancing Florida’s economy, tourism, health, transportation choices, recreation, conservation and quality of life. The Florida Greenways and Trails Council assisted with defining the goals and objectives of this plan and approved the plan in December 2023. The goals include implementing the FGTS, allocating strategic investments and resources to accelerate the completion of the FGTS, promoting and marketing the FGTS to residents and visitors, and establishing partnerships and engaging stakeholders.

**Appropriated Funds and Staff Time to Support Advisory Body**

There are no funds specifically appropriated for the Florida Greenways and Trails Council. As a part of their regional coordinating duties, one staff member within DEP’s Office of Greenways and Trails is assigned as staff to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council.

**Agency Recommendation**

DEP recommends that the Florida Greenways and Trails Council be continued. The Florida Greenways and Trails Council is necessary to continue expanding the FGTS to support the general work of DEP through partnerships/collaboration, information sharing, and guidance in creating the FGTS Plan and priority network maps.



## **Myakka River Management Coordinating Council**

### ***Statutory Authority***

The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council was established pursuant to section 258.501(7), F.S.

### ***Purpose of the Advisory Body***

The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council serves to provide interagency and intergovernmental coordination in the management of the Myakka River. The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council reviews and makes recommendations on proposals for amendments or modifications to section 258.501, F.S., as well as the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Management Plan.

### ***Advisory Body Membership***

The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council is currently comprised of 30 members, details of which are provided in the table below.

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>APPOINTING AUTHORITY</b>	<b>FILLED/ VACANT</b>	<b>TERM</b>	<b>VACANCY DATE</b>
Steve Giguere	DEP	Filled	No established term	N/A
Emily Barnett	Florida Department of Transportation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Jamie Richardson	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Filled	No established term	N/A
Melissa Price	Division of Historical Resources	Filled	No established term	N/A
Caroline Ritchey	Florida Forest Service	Vacant	No established term	N/A
Bruno Kapacinskas	Southwest Florida Water Management District	Filled	No established term	N/A
Amelia Williams	Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council	Filled	No established term	N/A
Debra Woithe	Manatee County	Filled	No established term	N/A
Howard Berna	Sarasota County	Filled	No established term	N/A
Ryan Pieper	Charlotte County	Filled	No established term	N/A
Verne Hall	City of Sarasota	Filled	No established term	N/A
Elizabeth Wong	City of North Port	Filled	No established term	N/A
Christina Rimes	City of Venice	Filled	No established term	N/A
Nicole Iadevaia	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Glenn Compton	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Steven Schaefer	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Jonathan Miller	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Becky Aych	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Ann Hardy	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Rob Wright	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Robert Clark	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Juliette Jones	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Hugh Havlik	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Edie Driest	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Barbara Lockhart	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Lee Amos	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Chuck Johnston	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Mike Chouinard	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A

Victor Dobrin	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A
Deborah Musallam	DEP upon Council recommendation	Filled	No established term	N/A

**Advisory Body Meetings**

The table below is a list of meeting dates and times for the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council for the preceding three fiscal years.

FISCAL YEAR 2023-24	
Date	Time
Aug. 11, 2023	9:30 a.m.
Dec. 1, 2023	9:30 a.m.
March 15, 2024	9:30 a.m.
FISCAL YEAR 2022-23	
Date	Time
Dec. 9, 2022	9:30 a.m.
April 7, 2023	9:30 a.m.
FISCAL YEAR 2021-22	
Oct. 22, 2021	9:30 a.m.
Jan. 31, 2022	9:30 a.m.
March 25, 2022	9:30 a.m.

**Summary of Advisory Body’s Workplan**

The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council has not adopted any formal workplan. This advisory body works to provide interagency and intergovernmental coordination in the management of the Myakka River on an ongoing basis. The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council primarily reviews new proposals for activities in the river area, Myakka River Protection Zone and wider watershed.

**Appropriated Funds and Staff Time to Support Advisory Body**

There are no funds specifically appropriated for the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council. As a liaison to the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council, one staff member within DEP’s Division of Recreation and Parks organizes meetings and responds to member inquiries. Other staff assist as needed during meetings and in associated actions of the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council. Two staff – one member and an alternate – represent DEP as a member of the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council.

**Agency Recommendation**

DEP recommends that the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council be continued. The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council is necessary to provide interagency and intergovernmental coordination in the management of the river and to update the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Management Plan.

## **Overview**

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## **Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program Water Quality Protection Program Steering Committee**

### ***Statutory Authority***

In 1990, the United States Congress enacted the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (KKNMS) and Protection Act (Public Law 101-605). The act directed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State of Florida and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to create a water quality protection program (WQPP) for the sanctuary to be managed by a steering committee.

### ***Purpose of the Advisory Body***

The steering committee is charged with establishing guidance, developing policy, and overseeing activities to restore and maintain sanctuary resources. The steering committee works collaboratively to ensure that the components of the WQPP are implemented, including funding. It includes representatives from various federal, state, and local agencies, as well as stakeholders from the community. The steering committee is co-chaired by EPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

### ***Advisory Body Membership***

The steering committee includes representatives from various federal, state, and local agencies, as well as stakeholders from the community. The steering committee is co-chaired by EPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Membership is below.

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>APPOINTING AUTHORITY</b>	<b>FILLED/ VACANT</b>	<b>TERM</b>	<b>VACANCY DATE</b>
John Blevins, or designee	EPA, Region IV	Filled	N/A	N/A
Kim Shugar, designee for Shawn Hamilton	Secretary, DEP	Filled	N/A	N/A
Sarah Fangman	National Oceanic and Atmospheric	Filled	N/A	N/A
Pedro Ramos	National Park Service, Everglades and Dry Tortugas	Filled	N/A	1/23/2023
Gretchen Ehlinger	U. S. Army Corps of Engineers	Vacant	N/A	4/7/2022
Christian Eggleston	Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuges	Vacant	N/A	7/1/2023
Justin Stiell	Florida Department of Economic Opportunity	Filled	N/A	N/A
Vacant	Florida Department of Health	Filled	N/A	N/A
Armando Vilaboy	South Florida Water Management District	Filled	N/A	N/A

Greg Velez/ Pam Albury	Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority	Filled	N/A	N/A
Andrea Leal	Florida Keys Mosquito Control District	Filled	N/A	N/A
Commissioner Craig Cates or designee	Monroe County Board of County Commissioners	Filled	N/A	N/A
Gil McRae	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Filled	N/A	N/A
Vice Mayor Freddie Foster or designee	City of Key Colony Beach	Filled	N/A	N/A
Mayor Teri Johnston or designee	City of Key West	Filled	N/A	N/A
George Garrett	City of Marathon	Filled	N/A	N/A
Mayor Buddy Pinder or designee	Islamorada Village of Islands Council	Filled	N/A	N/A
Chris Bergh	Steering Committee (The Nature Conservancy)	Filled	N/A	N/A
Patrick H. Rice	FKNMS (FKNMS Advisory Council)	Filled	2 years	N/A
Sue Heim	Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District	Filled	2 years	N/A
Patience Cohn	Steering Committee (Marine Industries Association of South Florida)			
Sandra Waters	Steering Committee			
Shelley Krueger	Florida Sea Grant	Filled	2 years	N/A

**Advisory Body Meetings**

The table below is a list of meeting dates and times for the preceding three fiscal years.

<b>FISCAL YEAR 2023-24</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Nov. 29, 2023	9 a.m.
Mar. 7, 2024	9 a.m.
July 30, 2024	9 a.m.
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2022-23</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Aug. 11, 2022	9 a.m.
Mar. 8-9, 2023	9 a.m.
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2021-22</b>	
July 23, 2021	1 p.m.
Nov. 15, 2021	9 a.m.
Mar. 7 2022	9 a.m.

**Summary of Advisory Body's Workplan**

No specific workplan at this time. Generally, implements corrective actions, monitoring programs, research and special studies, and education and outreach activities.

***Appropriated Funds and Staff Time to Support Advisory Body***

Staff time – 30 hours annually for the Director of the Division Environmental Assessment and Restoration at DEP to prepare and co-chair steering committee meetings; 60 hours of other staff time to prepare meeting materials and attend meetings.

***Agency Recommendation***

DEP recommends that the steering committee continues because it allows for engagement to address ongoing and new water quality issues in the FKNMS. It also allows agencies to discuss the best use of funding that the area receives from the federal government.

## **Overview**

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## **Onsite Sewage Program’s Variance Review and Advisory Committee**

### ***Statutory Authority***

The statutory authority for the Variance Review and Advisory Committee is found in subparagraph 381.0065(4)(h) 2., Florida Statutes (F.S.).

### ***Purpose of the Advisory Body***

Pursuant to subparagraph 381.0065(4)(h)2., F.S., DEP shall “appoint and staff a variance review and advisory committee, which shall meet monthly to recommend agency action on variance requests. The committee shall make its recommendations on variance requests at the meeting...”.

### ***Advisory Body Membership***

All members of the Onsite Sewage Program’s Variance Review and Advisory Committee are appointed by the Secretary of DEP. They serve three-year terms, which are staggered. The following list indicates the membership, the recommending organization for each member, whether the member positions are filled or vacant, the term end of each member position, and, if vacant, when the vacancy occurred.

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED BY</b>	<b>FILLED / VACANT</b>	<b>TERM ENDS</b>	<b>VACANCY DATE</b>
Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection or his or her Designee	Florida Department of Environmental Protection	Filled	12/31/2024	N/A
A Representative from the County Health Departments	Florida Department of Health	Filled	12/31/2025	N/A
A Representative from the Home Building Industry	Florida Home Builders Association	Vacant, recommendation received	12/31/2026	12/2023
A Representative from the Septic Tank Industry	Florida Onsite Wastewater Association	Filled	12/31/2026	N/A
A Representative from the Department of Health	Florida Department of Health	Vacant, recommendation received	12/31/2025	12/2023
A Representative from the Real Estate Industry	Florida Association of Realtors	Filled	12/31/2025	N/A
A Representative from the Engineering Profession	Florida Engineering Society	Vacant	12/31/2024	12/2023

**Advisory Body Meetings**

The table below lists the meeting dates and times for the preceding three fiscal years. A Notice of Meeting is published in the Florida Administrative Register, announcing the virtual public meeting dates and registration instructions. Each virtual public meeting is generally scheduled for the first Thursday of each month.

FISCAL YEAR 2023-24		FISCAL YEAR 2022-23		FISCAL YEAR 2021-22	
Date	Time	Date	Time	Date	Time
July 6, 2023	9 a.m.	July 7, 2022	9 a.m.	July 1, 2021	9 a.m.
Aug. 3, 2023	9 a.m.	Aug. 4, 2022	9 a.m.	Aug. 5, 2021	9 a.m.
Sept. 7, 2023	9 a.m.	Sept. 1, 2022	9 a.m.	Sept. 2, 2021	9 a.m.
Oct. 5, 2023	9 a.m.	Oct. 6, 2022	9 a.m.	Oct. 7, 2021	9 a.m.
Nov. 2, 2023	9 a.m.	Nov. 3, 2022	9 a.m.	Nov. 4, 2021	9 a.m.
Dec. 7, 2023	9 a.m.	Dec. 1, 2022	9 a.m.	Dec. 2, 2021	9 a.m.
Jan. 4, 2024	9 a.m.	Jan. 5, 2023	9 a.m.	Jan. 6, 2022	9 a.m.
Feb. 1, 2024	9 a.m.	Feb. 2, 2023	9 a.m.	Feb. 3, 2022	9 a.m.
March 7, 2024	9 a.m.	March 2, 2023	9 a.m.	March 3, 2022	9 a.m.
April 4, 2024	9 a.m.	April 6, 2023	9 a.m.	April 7, 2022	9 a.m.
May 2, 2024	9 a.m.	May 4, 2023	9 a.m.	May 5, 2022	9 a.m.
June 6, 2024	9 a.m.	June 1, 2023	9 a.m.	June 2, 2022	9 a.m.

**Summary of Advisory Body’s Workplan**

The Onsite Sewage Program’s Variance Review and Advisory Committee will continue to meet monthly to review variance applications pursuant to section 381.0065, F.S., and provide recommendations to the department for agency action.

**Appropriated Funds and Staff Time to Support Advisory Body**

There is no specific budget category to track staff time and costs of the variance process in general or the specific costs attributable to the existence of the Onsite Sewage Program’s Variance Review and Advisory Committee. Therefore, the following estimates are used:

Appropriated Funds – The meetings of the Onsite Sewage Program’s Variance Review and Advisory Committee are virtual meetings. Therefore, no travel expenses occur for which committee members or staff would need to be reimbursed. As part of the variance application review process, the Onsite Sewage Program’s Variance Review and Advisory Committee members are provided monthly packets of the variance applications by department staff. Until October of 2023, this occurred via postal shipping of paper copies to five members not located in

Tallahassee. Starting in November of 2023, access is provided electronically via a link to DEP's electronic document management system.

Staff Time – Staff time specifically for the Onsite Sewage Program's Variance Review and Advisory Committee is calculated by estimating the preparation and time involved for each meeting, staff being the point of contact for a member, overseeing the member appointment and staff time involved in mailing the variance application and supporting documents submitted by each applicant. After the Onsite Sewage Program's Variance Review and Advisory Committee makes their recommendation to DEP, the final agency action is issued by sending a letter to the applicant, which is executed and processed by Onsite Sewage Program staff. The meeting generally involves two employees, one to facilitate the discussions and record the results, and one to facilitate the participation of the applicant, their representative and the general public. Meetings generally last about five hours. The time to solicit new appointment nominations and appoint members is estimated at eight hours per year. Mailing (physical or email) is estimated at four hours per meeting.

### ***Agency Recommendation***

DEP recommends the continual involvement of this advisory body. The benefits of having this advisory body include the following:

1. The Onsite Sewage Program's Variance Review and Advisory Committee consists of people representing multiple stakeholder groups with experience in the onsite sewage treatment and disposal system industry that can evaluate issues based on their professional experiences. The members can independently assess the feasibility of applicant's request and recommend possible alternatives, which will protect the environment.
2. The monthly meetings provide an avenue for contractors, homeowners and septic system applicants to petition their issues at predetermined dates and times. Recommendations to DEP for final agency action are addressed monthly.
3. The Onsite Sewage Program's Variance Review and Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public, which provides transparency. This open forum allows interested parties to participate and provide their comments.