

**LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BUSINESS IMPACT ESTIMATE
PROPOSED COUNTY ORDINANCE**

NAME OF ORDINANCE: Water Conservation Ordinance

I. SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE

A. Statement of Purpose

Protect water resources for future and continued use.

B. Narrative Summary of Ordinance (Several Sentence Summary)

Last year the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) raised concern with water levels within the Sandstone Aquifer in eastern Lehigh Acres. On October 6th, 2023, the SFWMD notified Lee County in writing to cease issuance of irrigation well construction permits within a six square mile area of Southeastern Lehigh Acres. Though SFWMD identified an area within Lehigh, the monitoring wells throughout the County have shown the same declining trend.

In order to address the declining aquifer levels throughout the county, staff is proposing revisions to the current Water Conservation Ordinance. The major revision is to implement a one day a week watering schedule between the beginning of February through the end of May. Typically, the aquifers peak towards the end of rainy season and show the most stress during the April-May timeframe. One day a week irrigation during the dry season helps conserve water and protect the aquifer from the continued population growth, while still providing enough water to sustain healthy turf and plant life during the dormant season.

II. BUSINESS IMPACT ESTIMATE

- A. Estimate of direct compliance costs that businesses may reasonably incur if the ordinance is enacted: **Businesses should see a reduction in electric from the reduced irrigation taking place.**
- B. Identification of any new charge or fee on businesses subject to the proposed ordinance or for which businesses will be financially responsible: **The major revision is to implement a one day a week watering schedule between the beginning of February through the end of May. And a proposed increase to the fine fee schedule.**
- C. Estimate of the county's regulatory costs, including estimate of revenues from any new charges or fees that will be imposed on businesses to cover such costs: **The only revenue would be from repeat offenders, and that would be an increasing fine scale per incident.**
- D. Estimate of the number of businesses likely to be impacted by the ordinance: **Exemptions are proposed as well for golf courses who would see the biggest impact to their business.**