

White, Margo

From: Pereira, Ana on behalf of Santiago, Martha
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 8:46 AM
To: White, Margo
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]: Support for Land Development Code and Stormwater Management Enhancements: LDCT-2025-3

Received on behalf of Commissioner Santiago.

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

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From: Brian Holbrook <bholbrooksourcing@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 8:21 AM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polk-county.net>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Support for Land Development Code and Stormwater Management Enhancements: LDCT-2025-3

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Hell Commissioner Santiago--

I am writing to express strong support for the proposal recommended by the Polk Planning board LDCT-2025-3. As background, I am a degreed engineer and land-owner in the "stressed" Itchepackesassa basin. While not foolproof, these updates will provide significantly enhanced protections for the County against adverse impacts from development activity.

A fundamental shortcoming of the water management review process is insufficient code and stormwater requirements. Authorities do an excellent job of ensuring a project complies with a permit, but this in no way means complying with the permit meaningfully mitigates risks specific to any given

area. Studies will tout handling "drainage" at required storm level event thresholds and "retaining" a certain volume of water. This is a nearly meaningless assurance in several of the flood plagued areas of Polk County. The issues many of these communities experience are a result of pressure upland in the watershed, and overflow from constrained drainage systems.

- Recognizing that requirements must be enhanced in "stressed" and "closed" basins is a common sense position
- Requiring modeling of a 100 year event and the system's ability to handle pressure from upstream of development is a large step forward
- Requiring that post-development runoff be less than pre-development state and that systems be able to handle 125% of the system's designed flow might produce minor improvements, but most likely will help offset the inherent error in relying on decades-old watershed models, which often do not detail substantial private drainage area

While lawyers will position that a developer can not be expected to fix an existing problem, they have a legal obligation to ensure that their activity does not make a problem worse. In many cases complying with permitting requirements falls well short of that position, but gives the developer a legal defense that they "met requirements". Our requirements are insufficient for many areas. These changes will be a step towards improving that. In the county's most flood plagued areas communities are at risk primarily due to large-scale topography changes which impact the behavior of floodwaters during overflow events. It is essential that we expect developers to model these 100 year events and demonstrate how their activity will not alter flow from these events to adjacent properties. This is largely absent in the current processes.

Fundamentally, zoning and land-use are recognized non-structural flood mitigation controls. The County has relied on these each time they have decreased the home density allowed in various regions. State statutes Chapter 125 grants counties the power to establish and administer programs for flood control and adopt regulations promoting public health and safety. Chapter 163.3164 provides the county with the authority to grant, deny, or condition development approvals. Ideally, the county should fiercely protect land-use guidelines and zoning restrictions in some of these flood-plagued areas, but enacting meaningful code and stormwater requirements is a positive step forward.

Thank you for your consideration and past recognition of the issues communities like ours face,

Brian Holbrook, MBA, MS,