



Sheriff Grady Judd

Polk County

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March 19, 2025

Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church Street
Bartow, Florida 33830

RE: Request for Adoption of Boating-Restricted Areas per Florida Statute 327.46(1)(c)(3)b

To the Honorable Members of the Polk County Board of County Commissioners:

Pursuant to Florida Statute 327.46(1)(c)(3)b, I respectfully submit for consideration the proposed ordinance titled "Polk County Waterway Protection Code" (Ordinance No. 2024-), ***as well as the accompanying Resolution No. 2025-***, which establish designated swim areas and vessel exclusion zones in certain portions of Lake Winterset, Lake Clinch, and Lake Ariana.

The need for these boating-restricted areas has arisen due to significant public safety concerns identified on these bodies of water. With over 550 lakes and more than 93,000 acres of navigable waterways in Polk County, congestion between vessels and swimmers has led to dangerous situations that threaten the health, safety, and general welfare of both residents and visitors.

Specifically, these areas have seen increased incidents of near-miss collisions, excessive wake damage to docks and shoreline property, and interference with non-motorized recreational users. Our deputies have reported a growing number of complaints from residents and documented situations where vessel operation at unsafe speeds and proximity to swimmers created hazardous conditions.

The proposed ordinance and resolution are designed to:

- Minimize conflicts between vessels and swimmers;
- Reduce the risk of accidents and injuries;
- Promote safe and responsible boating;
- Ensure that waterways are enjoyed by all users in a safe environment.

The proposed ordinance and resolution meet the requirements set forth in Chapter 327, Florida Statutes. I respectfully request the Board's adoption of these boating-restricted areas to enhance public safety and support the responsible use of Polk County's waterways.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mario J. Cabrera
General Counsel