EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendation to endorse a Collier County-sponsored initiative for the development of a statewide coalition to address Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issues impacting Florida local governments and their citizens, and to approve accompanying Resolution

OBJECTIVE: For the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to review and endorse a Collier County plan that includes reaching out to state and federal elected officials, as well as to Florida local governments, state agencies and other entities with common FEMA issues, to build support for formation of a coalition of those impacted negatively by FEMA actions and inactions. The strategy the BCC is being asked to approve includes inviting similarly affected local governments and organizations to a workshop in June 2014 in Orlando to be held in conjunction with a Florida Association of Counties (FAC) Annual Conference. An initiating letter and proposed resolution are attached.

CONSIDERATION: Collier County staff is pursuing a corrective response that reverses FEMA’s deobligation of more than $11.1 million in funding previously approved by both the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) and FEMA. The funds were awarded to Collier County in response to damages from Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma in 2005. This deobligation is part of the “Disallowed Cost Initiative” program which was instituted by FEMA on November 16, 2011. The goal of this program was to recover $800 million in previously obligated funds. Through 2012, more than 200 cities, counties, schools, state agencies and a myriad of other organizations throughout Florida have experienced approximately $275 million in deobligations.

In addition, Collier County is experiencing difficulty with FEMA over the agency’s handling of floodplain map review and approval. Collier County has spent more than $400,000 to update floodplain basins information. FEMA has now indicated that it lacks adequate funds to review updated Collier County’s floodplain maps.

Collier County has not been successful in addressing FEMA problems on its own. The intent is to engage in a conversation with others having comparable issues with FEMA and possibly forming a statewide coalition of those with unified common problems. The goal is to most effectively and efficiently resolve conflicts with FEMA. With the assistance of FAC and The Ferguson Group (TFG), Collier County is seeking BCC approval to reach out and address FEMA concerns with state and federal legislators as well as other affected municipalities and organizations.

FISCAL IMPACT: This executive summary has no immediate fiscal impact.
GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPACT: This executive summary has no immediate growth management impact.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS: This item is a policy decision for the Board; no legal issues are raised.

RECOMMENDATION: That the BCC reviews and approves the proposed Collier County strategy to form a coalition to address issues of concern with FEMA and solicit support from state and federal elected officials. The BCC is being asked to endorse the following plan:

I Identify Stakeholders and Supporters in the State of Florida

- The BCC will designate a Commissioner to represent the Board.
- Collier County intends on building a coalition of those with commonalities in FEMA experience.
- Identify other Florida local governments and organizations with similar FEMA deobligation and floodplain map review issues.

II Engage Congressional Delegation Members as well as members of the Collier County Legislative Delegations and the Southwest Florida Legislative Delegation

- Request support for unified coalition to meet and discuss FEMA.
- Schedule meetings with elected representatives at their convenience to brief on FEMA issues and provide status reports.

III Coordinate with FAC to orchestrate a FEMA Workshop in conjunction with FAC Annual Conference in Orlando in June 2014.

- FAC has offered to assist in organization and staging this workshop. They will distribute invite letters (attached) to the FAC membership, to the Florida League of Cities membership, and to other identified stakeholders.
- Collier County staff has crafted a Resolution, a workshop agenda and a background bullets document to accompany the invite letters.
- FAC is coordinating with FDEM officials to request the state agency’s involvement in the workshop.
- Outcome of the workshop is to coalesce which will determine next steps.

IV If necessary, Collier County officials will travel to meet with FEMA officials in Atlanta and/or Washington, D.C. to further address issues of concern.

Meetings were held at FEMA Region IV in Atlanta in July 2013.

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Attachments: FEMA Workshop Agenda
  Invite Letter to stakeholders
  Collier County Resolution re FEMA
  Background Bullets re FEMA Issues