

SWFRPC Resolution #2014-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL SUPPORTING RECURRING FUNDING FOR THE UF/IFAS SOUTHWEST FLORIDA RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

WHEREAS, the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC), part of University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), was established as a UF support facility in 1958 and became a UF/IFAS station in 1986 after agricultural interests in southwest Florida convinced the state that the region needed its own center to serve the area's unique agricultural needs; and,

WHEREAS, the research and extension capacity at SWFREC has been and will continue to be an economic engine for the region and the state; and,

WHEREAS, the SWFREC serves the entire state focusing on Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades Counties, which produce almost 25% of Florida's citrus and nearly 80% of the tomatoes and other fresh vegetables sold during winter to northeastern U.S. markets; and,

WHEREAS, Southwest Florida agricultural interests, including citrus, vegetable, sugarcane, and ornamental growers, along with cattle ranchers, collectively generate \$1 billion in farm sales annually, and are the core of an agribusiness and natural resource economy in southwest Florida that contributes more than \$6 billion of total annual economic activity statewide; and,

WHEREAS, the SWFREC is a valuable regional portal providing technology and science regarding the management of water, environmental issues, natural resources, and economic development to the region that impacts the entire state; and,

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center ranked second place among the 11 UF/*Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences* research and education centers for competitive grants received and third place for refereed scientific publications, two important metrics of academic productivity; and,

WHEREAS, in recent years, the SWFREC has lost funding for staff, faculty and research programs, limiting and endangering the ability of the SWFREC to promote and protect the health and productivity of southwest Florida and statewide agricultural interests;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, is in support of the South Florida Ag Council request for \$1.8 Million of the \$5.5 Million UF/IFAS budget request for recurring funding to provide for additional faculty positions, support staff, and research operations and programming at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center.

DULY ADOPTED by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council this 20th day of November, 2014.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL




Teresa Heitmann, Chair


Margaret Wuerstle, Executive Director