



**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL & INSTITUTIONAL
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026 – 10:00 AM
MINUTES**

Committee Members

James Morris – CEMEX
Ilia Balcom – Duke Energy Florida
Rachel McGraw – Duke Energy Florida (alternate)
Keith Nadaskay – Mosaic Fertilizer
Justin Gostnell – Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Terry Eastley – Tampa Electric Company
Nick Fletcher – Tampa Electric Company (alternate)
Max Levine – Publix
Jennifer Ritter – Coca-Cola Beverages Florida

Governing Board Liaison

James Holton

Board Administrative Support

Virginia Singer
Barbara Matrone

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The Industrial, Commercial & Institutional Advisory Committee (ICIAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, via Microsoft Teams.

Chair James Morris called the meeting to order, and attendance was taken.

Governing Board Liaison James Holton welcomed the committee.

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Approval of August 12, 2025 & February 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the draft minutes from the August 12, 2025 meeting and the February 20, 2026 tour. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

None.

5. Legislative Update

Cara Martin, Government and Community Affairs Office Chief, gave a legislative update. Committee weeks were held from October–December 2025, and the regular session ran from January 13 to March 13, 2026. As with the prior year, the Legislature did not pass a state budget; a special session was scheduled for May 12–29 to complete budget work. The state fiscal year begins on July 1. A separate special session was recently held to address congressional redistricting, artificial intelligence, and medical freedom. This year 1,926 bills were filed and 237 passed (12.3% passage rate).

Ms. Martin highlighted several significant bills that did pass. The Claims Against the Government bill passed after several years of unsuccessful attempts, increasing liability limits, shortening the timeframe for presenting claims, and revising tort statutes of limitation. A conservation lands bill was approved, updating surplus-lands noticing procedures and requiring 30-day public posting for District parcels proposed for sale or exchange; this bill was signed by the Governor. Legislation relating to large-scale data centers clarified local government authority, established utility tariff requirements, set water-use permitting standards, including reclaimed water considerations and public hearings and directed an independent study on data center impacts.

Ms. Martin also reviewed the Department of Environmental Protection's agency package, which includes new requirements for solar facility permitting, coastal resiliency investment tools, septic system revisions within the Indian River Lagoon Protection Program, and ratification of minimum flows and levels rules for the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee rivers and priority springs. Additional enacted bills included rural special district funding, statewide coastal resiliency guidelines, increased penalties for unlicensed engineering, stormwater treatment and credit program revisions, and a pilot program authorizing the Department of Financial Services to accept certain stablecoins for governmental transactions. She also discussed bills that did not pass including landscape irrigation work, establishing statewide watering schedules, and prohibiting certain irrigation practices. Water management legislation included state preemption of local water quality and wetlands regulations, new quorum and voting requirements for water management district boards, capital improvement plan requirements, and authorization for voter-approved ad valorem taxes for capital projects.

Ms. Ilia Balcom asked whether the District had received any information regarding a potential data center in the Ft. Meade area. Ms. Martin responded that the District had previously sent a letter to the City of Ft. Meade before approving the agreement, but no water use permit application has been submitted at this time.

6. Hydrologic Conditions Update

Tamera McBride, Hydrologic Data Manager, provided an update on current hydrologic conditions. She noted that May marks the final month of the eight-month dry season (October through May). For the month of March, rainfall was below average. The District received 2.5 inches of rainfall, reflecting a 0.7-inch deficit compared to the historical average of 3.2 inches. Rainfall totals across the District ranged from a high of 9.58 inches to a low of 0.5 inches.

The 12-month rainfall distribution from April 2025 to March 2026 averaged 39.8 inches, representing a 12.8-inch deficit compared to the historic average of 52.6 inches. A graph illustrating the 12-month rainfall departure from average showed multiple periods of surplus or deficit rainfall since 1998. The 12-month period ending in March 2026 reflected a 12.8-inch deficit, compared to a 1.6-inch surplus during the same period ending March 2025. Provisional rainfall data for April indicate that the District has received an average of 1.7 inches of rainfall, which is a 0.9-inch deficit compared to the historical average of 2.6 inches.

Ms. McBride then reviewed recent groundwater levels across the northern, central and southern counties, as well as surface water levels in the Northern Lakes, Tampa Bay Lakes, Polk Upland Lakes and Lake Wales Ridge Lakes regions. She also showed another set of graphs and discussed the eight-week mean discharge of the Withlacoochee, Hillsborough, Alafia and Peace rivers. She also discussed public supply volumes for the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority and the Tampa Bay area.

Ms. McBride concluded with a review of the near-term climate forecast, including seasonal outlooks for temperature and precipitation for the period of May through July 2026. According to the Climate Prediction Center, there is a 40 to 50 % chance of above-average temperatures and precipitation across the District during this three-month period. For May, the National Weather Service is predicting drier conditions, with rainfall expected to increase in June. The extended climate forecasts for June through August indicate equal chances of above- and below-normal precipitation, with drier conditions anticipated from July through October. For the period of October through January, forecasts indicate a likelihood of above-average precipitation.

7. Water Shortage Orders

Krista Smith, Staff Hydrologist, provided an update on current water shortage orders. She referenced the authority under Section 373.246(3), Florida Statutes, which provides that, in accordance with the water shortage plan, the Governing Board may impose such restrictions as may be necessary to protect the water resources of the area from serious harm and to restore them to their previous condition. The plan requires the District to assign a water shortage phase based upon consideration of the following factors: drought indicators and drought condition levels, current regional lake levels, public supply storage status, precipitation outlook, and availability of alternative water supply.

Ms. Smith summarized the four water shortage phases:

Phase I – the moderate alert to prepare for possible worsening conditions.

Phase II – the severe water shortage where prudent actions to assure only reasonable water uses are occurring.

Phase III – the extreme water shortage to minimize nonessential water use.

Phase IV – the critical water shortage is a temporary suspension of nonessential water use.

She then discussed Districtwide conditions for the northern, central, and southern regions as of May 4, 2026, along with public supply storage levels for Tampa Bay Water's C.W. Bill Young Reservoir.

She reported that the modified Phase III phase has been in effect since April 3, 2026. Users should continue to test irrigation systems for leaks and inefficiencies. Cleaning and maintenance of irrigation systems are allowed on the restricted day with an attendant on site in the area being tested. Irrigation systems may routinely be operated for such purposes no more than once per week, and the total run time for each zone shall not exceed 10 minutes during the test.

Ms. Smith concluded her presentation with an overview of recommended actions for users during a water shortage and noted that the District will contact permittees as necessary to ensure that the required actions of the water shortage order are being implemented.

8. Development of Agenda Topics

None.

9. Announcements and Other Business

None.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.