

Pasco County Joins TBEP Partnership

Pasco County has joined the TBEP partnership, marking the first addition to TBEP's Policy Board since the Program's formation in 1991.

As a formal member of our Policy Board, Pasco will pay member dues like our other major local partners (Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Clearwater, St. Pete, Tampa and SWFWMD) and have a seat on both our Management and Policy Boards. The dues are based on percentage of the population within the Tampa Bay watershed -- \$22,415 for Pasco County in the coming year.

The invitation was suggested by our Policy Board during a strategic planning workshop in 2104. It took considerable time to lay the groundwork, but Pasco's membership was approved by the Policy Board last week. Pasco County Commissioner Jack Mariano now joins our Board.

The addition of Pasco makes sense, said TBEP Executive Director Holly Greening, since the challenges facing the bay increasingly require regional cooperation and solutions. And the additional membership dues will assist TBEP in leveraging funds, including federal grants, to implement management, research and education projects that benefit the bay.

Greening also noted that TBEP has provided an impressive "bang for the buck" for its local partners over the years.

"Since we currently provide an average of \$57 back to our local partners for every \$1 they give us, our local partners have considered the Estuary Program a good investment, and we hope Pasco will feel the same," she said.



Commissioner Jack Mariano is Pasco County's representative on our Policy Board.