

March 1, 2022



Pelican River Watershed District Managers,

The Lake Detroiters Association and Lakes Melissa Sallie Improvement Association Boards represent 1,000+ property owners, many of whom have expressed dismay that PRWD is considering terminating the aquatic plant debris roadside pickup program. After reviewing the materials provided at last week's meeting our board members do not agree with the PRWD arguments for discontinuing the roadside pickup portions of Projects 1-B and 1-C.

Given the decades-long precedents of providing roadside pickup program and assessing property owners for its costs, the promise of *continuing the roadside pickup program* made explicit in the District's 2019 10-Year Plan, the same plan's assertion that the pickup program is a "high priority" in managing aquatic invasive species, and the relatively short time that users of the pickup program and potential replacement contractors have to make alternative arrangements, the Board urges that the District to delay abandoning the program, and lake shore residents.

If it is ever decided to abandon the program, our boards asks the District Managers to work out a subsidy program for contractors to help them finance and adapt to new services. We understand that assessments for the program have already been approved for projects 1-B and 1-C and will be collected from residents in 2022.

The Boards observe that with the current roadside pickup program a significant amount of plant material is removed from the lake. If the incentives encouraging that practice are reduced by eliminating the roadside pickup, or increasing its cost, the amounts of biological material removed will decline to the detriment of both the recreational and ecological values of the lake. Allowing plant material to decompose on the shore will degrade swimming beaches and spawning areas. Disgruntled shoreline residents pushing "weeds" back to the lake on offshore wind days also can generate interference with fishers and boaters; and decaying material may replace sandy bottoms with muck in some portions of the lake.

We understand that not all shore-owners need or utilize roadside pickup, just like not all shore-owners benefited from harvesting, or herbicide applications, in contrast to the underlying assumption of projects 1-B and 1-C. On the other hand, all these lake enhancement activities share the attribute that they do have benefits that extend beyond the point of harvest or application, *or pickup*. And many non-shore-owners did and do enjoy the benefits from such efforts too.

We hope that you will consider our plea carefully and favorably. If you have questions or would like to further discuss our ideas, please contact us. We look forward to timely involvements of the stake-holding members of LDA and MSIA in further decisions that impact our respective lakes.

Laurie Olson, President, Lake Detroiters Association

Mike Becraft, President, Melissa and Sallie Improvement Association