



City of North Port

Commission Office
4970 City Hall Boulevard
North Port, Florida 34286

Tel: (941) 429-7000
Fax: (941) 429-7008

May 5, 2026

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20515

****RE: Support for H.R. 642 – Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025****

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman:

On behalf of the City Commission of the City of North Port, Florida, we write to express our strong support for H.R. 642, *the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025*, which would designate the 34-mile segment of the Myakka River within Sarasota County as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System under the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers model.

The Myakka River is one of Southwest Florida's most significant natural assets and plays a vital role in the environmental health, economic vitality, and quality of life in our region. As a community directly connected to the river and its watershed, the City of North Port recognizes the importance of preserving its natural character, protecting water quality, and sustaining the diverse habitats that support wildlife and outdoor recreation.

This proposed designation builds upon decades of successful stewardship at the state and local levels, including the work of the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council and existing protections established by the State of Florida and Sarasota County. The Partnership Wild and Scenic River model is particularly appropriate, as it reinforces local control while providing access to technical assistance, coordination, and resources from the National Park Service.

Importantly, this designation does not impose federal land use control or affect private property rights. Instead, it enhances and supports the strong framework already in place through collaboration among local governments, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders.

The City of North Port joins Sarasota County, regional partners, and numerous conservation and community organizations in urging the Committee on Natural Resources to take up and advance H.R. 642. This designation represents a meaningful opportunity to preserve the Myakka River's outstanding values for current residents and future generations while strengthening the collaborative management efforts that have made it a model for conservation.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. We appreciate your leadership and stand ready to provide any additional information that may assist the Committee in its review.

cc: Members, House Committee on Natural Resources

Sincerely,

Mayor, Pete Emrich, City of North Port

On behalf of the City Commission