



## Board of Collier County Commissioners

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District 1

Georgia A. Hiller, Esq.  
District 2

Tom Henning  
District 3

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District 4

Tim Nance  
District 5

July 7, 2015

The Honorable Rick Scott,  
Governor, State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001  
(850) 488-7146  
RickScott@eog.myflorida.com

RE – **Veto of Rollover Funding** – Collier County Business Accelerator / Grant Agreement  
#SL007 - \$2.5MM (Veto: 6/23/15, page 84 of 85, Section 104, Page 422)

Governor Scott;

The Collier County Board of County Commissioners has noted with disappointment your veto of the revision and reappropriation funding for the Collier County Business Accelerator. While we understand and support the need for conservative fiscal management, we would like to provide you with a brief synopsis of our efforts and the progress on this worthy economic development program, to which we remain fully committed, in the hope continued funding can be secured.

**Western Collier County Accelerator** to date:

- Management and Business Plan adopted and in place
- 13 fee paying businesses - 7 occupying office space / 6 participating virtually (6 of these firms are international)
- Global contacts and relationships established with cooperating businesses in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, and Finland, with anticipated addition of 2 Finnish businesses to the Accelerator within 60 days
- Accelerator inquiries at the rate of 2-4 weekly with full occupancy of permanent Accelerator space expected prior to October 1, 2015.
- Strong five SW Florida County regional support and participation.

**Immokalee Culinary Accelerator** to date:

- Management and Business Plan adopted and in place

- Collaborative relationships and work plans established with the following cooperators:
  - \* University of Florida – 2 meetings in Gainesville/Immokalee with Sr. Vice President Jack Payne, Deans, and Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition faculty establishing technology support and a UF supported Food Laboratory within the facility.
  - \* UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center / Collier County Extension - Faculty dedication and commitment
  - \* Southwest Florida Ag Council – 5 County regional Agribusiness / Food Industry Association: Collier, Hendry, Lee, Charlotte, Glades – to support *Fresh from Florida* and agricultural business diversification.
  - \* Collier District Schools / Immokalee Technical Center, Culinary Institute
  - \* Naples/Collier County **Blue Zone** Working Group – fresh, healthy foods, nutrition
- Professional Culinary kitchen design plans completed (\$128K) Responsive Bid received for construction, commercial kitchen equipment, cold food storage, centered on a 290 sq. ft. Food Laboratory. (Lab designed in collaboration with UF/Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition)
- Contract Award suspended as of 6/23/15

As evidenced above, we believe that the Collier County Business Accelerator has made excellent progress in the few short months since the execution of the Grant agreement with the Department of Economic Opportunity in November 2014. This program, if allowed to develop, will support economic diversification in Collier County, as well as SW Florida regional agribusiness, currently pressured by Citrus Greening Disease and increasing market losses. Much needed job creation in Immokalee is a priority. The Collier Business Accelerator is clearly able to complement local and regional industry strengths, focus state level technology and expertise, and if supported to completion, will generate a huge compound economic impact and be an excellent return on investment.

While the Collier BCC recognizes your responsibility to establish economic priorities and make hard decisions, we respectfully request a meeting with your staff, and that of the Department of Economic Opportunity, to discuss options for this worthy project to secure needed funding and be completed.

Sincerely,

Tim Nance  
 Chairman, Collier County Board of County Commissioners

CC:  
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