



September 15, 2026

Palm Beach County Commission  
301 N. Olive Avenue  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

**RE: SURFRIDER FOUNDATION CHAPTERS OPPOSE NEW PARKING FEES AT COUNTY BEACHES LIMITING PUBLIC ACCESS**

Dear Palm Beach County Commissioners,

Please accept the following letter from the Surfrider Foundation Palm Beach County, Treasure Coast, and Broward Chapters regarding new parking fees at Palm Beach County beaches. The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches for all people. Surfrider's twelve volunteer-led Florida chapters engage in education, advocacy, and stewardship for the protection of our incredible coasts and communities. Members of the Palm Beach County Chapter reside in the county and often frequent these beaches for recreation, cleanups, and other Chapter activities. Additionally, members of the Treasure Coast and Broward Chapters, in neighboring counties, regularly visit these beaches. Access to our public beaches is an integral part of the Florida way of life. We encourage the Commission to ensure that any changes to parking policy do not turn that access into a line item to be monetized.

We appreciate the Commission's decision on July 15 to keep public parking free for County residents. Thank you for listening and responding to County residents' immediate concerns. If the Commission is set on imposing new parking fees at County beaches, it is imperative that the process to secure a resident pass is easy for residents to actually use. We urge the Commission ensure the following as the resident parking pass program is developed:

- The resident parking pass must be County-wide, available to all Palm Beach County residents regardless of which town or municipality they live in.
- The process for obtaining a pass must be simple and accessible, with multiple ways to complete it (online, by mail, by phone, and in person) and minimal burden on residents. A complicated registration process will effectively exclude important members of our community, including seniors, low-income families, and those without reliable internet access.



- The County should launch a robust public information campaign, well before any new fees take effect, so that every resident knows the pass exists and how to get one.

We remain concerned about the parking fees proposed for non-County residents. A rate of at least \$4 per hour is steep, and history shows that fees like this tend to climb over time once they are in place. We urge the Commission to reconsider whether imposing new fees at this time is appropriate or the best course of action. If moving forward with new parking fees for non-County residents, we urge the Commission to:

- Conduct a survey of beach users to establish accurate, data-driven revenue projections at the designated beaches before setting non-resident parking fees, rather than relying on flat estimates.
- Cap non-resident parking fees below \$4 per hour, with clear limits on how much fees can increase in future years.
- Establish free parking during designated hours or seasonally.
- Develop fee exemptions for vulnerable groups, including seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, and low-income community members.
- Invest in public transportation and pedestrian infrastructure serving County beaches.
- Commit to full transparency in how parking revenue is reported and spent, restricting its use to improving public beach access, beach maintenance and services, water quality, and coastal environmental protection — not general fund gaps.

Our public beaches belong to everyone, not just those who can afford to spend time on them. We ask the Commission to keep affordability, accessibility, and transparency at the center of this policy decision as the FY2027 budget is finalized.

Thank you for considering the public interests represented by the Surfrider Foundation.

Sincerely,

**Molly Hietapelto**

*Chair, Palm Beach County Chapter, Surfrider Foundation*

**Roselyne Rose**

*Vice Chair, Treasure Coast Chapter, Surfrider Foundation*



**Kelly Fischer**

*Chair, Broward Chapter, Surfrider Foundation*

**Evan Orellana**

*Florida Regional Manager, Surfrider Foundation*