



**FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**

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Gainesville, FL 32627-5007

February 11, 2026

David Long, Project Representative  
Florida Department of Transportation  
801 N. Broadway Avenue, MS 1-41  
Bartow, Florida 33830

SUBJECT: Comments on Corridor Alternatives for PD&E Study, FPID 455782-1

Dear Mr. Long:

The Florida Native Plant Society has reviewed the alternative corridors being considered for the proposed State Road 70 to State Road 66 (FPID 455782-1) Project and recommend a no-build option. We see no compelling public need for a limited access highway through this rural region of the state and believe the environmental impacts likely to result from development of the highway provide a compelling justification for abandoning the project.

We are particularly concerned about the impacts to imperiled plant species that are potentially present within the corridors. These include many that are endemic to the region. Table 1 identifies a subset of the plant species that would potentially be affected. We understand that a large number of imperiled wildlife species would also be affected.

TABLE 1. Endangered and threatened plant species potentially impacted by proposed highway construction within the alternative corridors assessed in PD&E study FPID 455782-1. The potential presence of these species was confirmed using the Biodiversity Matrix screening tool maintained by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory.

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	FEDERAL STATUS	STATE STATUS
<i>Bonamia grandiflora</i>	Florida bonamia	T	E
<i>Calamintha ashei</i>	Ashe's savory		T
<i>Calopogon multiflorus</i>	Many-flowered grass pink		T
<i>Chionanthus pygmaeus</i>	pygmy fringe tree	E	E
<i>Clitoria fragrans</i>	Scrub pigeon-wing	T	E
<i>Coleataenia abcissa</i>	cutthroatgrass		E

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<i>Conradina brevifolia</i>	Short-leaved rosemary	E	E
<i>Hypericum edisonianum</i>	Edison's ascyrum		E
<i>Liatris ohlingerae</i>	Florida blazing star	E	E
<i>Listia aestivalis</i>	pondspice		E
<i>Nemastylis floridana</i>	Celestial lily		E
<i>Nolina atopocarpa</i>	Florida beargrass	T	T
<i>Nolina brittoniana</i>	Britton's beargrass	E	E
<i>Platanthera integra</i>	Yellow fringeless orchid		E
<i>Polygala lewtonii</i>	Lewton's polygala	E	E
<i>Polygonella basiramia</i>	Florida jointweed	E	E
<i>Warea carteri</i>	Carter's warea	E	E

E – Listed Endangered, T – Listed Threatened

Making strategic improvements to the region's existing network of highways, including especially US17 and US27, would serve as a much more cost-effective solution for improving the hurricane evacuation, freight traffic, and other transportation issues cited as the rationale for constructing the highway. Additionally, the state is making significant investments to protect lands in the study area that overlap with the Florida Wildlife Corridor (FWC). While the direct impacts of highway construction would run counter to the state's priority to protect lands in the FWC, those impacts would be dwarfed by the secondary impacts of induced sprawl development if the highway is constructed.

FNPS appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed alternative corridors and strongly recommends the "no build" alternative.

Respectfully,



Eugene M. Kelly, President  
Florida Native Plant Society