



AGENDA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor & City Commissioners

VIA: Brenda L. Bryant, City Manager

FROM: Office of the City Manager

SUBJECT: Letter Supporting the Re-Designation of the South-Central Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO)

DATE: May 12th, 2026

GENERAL SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

The City of Pahokee is currently included in the South-Central Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), a regional designation that includes Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties, as well as the municipalities of Pahokee, Belle Glade, and South Bay in Palm Beach County, and the Immokalee area in Collier County.

In June 2021, the RAO designation was renewed for a five-year term through Executive Order 21-149. This designation is set to expire in June 2026. The State of Florida, through Section 288.0656, Florida Statutes, recognizes that rural communities face unique economic challenges and provides support through the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI), administered by the Florida Department of Commerce.

As part of the re-designation process, each participating county and municipality is required to submit a formal letter of support indicating its desire to remain part of the RAO. Following submission of the letter of support, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be presented for consideration to formalize continued participation and cooperation within the RAO framework.

BUDGET IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the approval of this item.

LEGAL NOTE:

This item has been reviewed for legal sufficiency. Any additional legal guidance will be deferred to the City Attorney as necessary.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Commission approve Resolution No. 2026-21 supporting the re-designation of the South-Central Rural Area of Opportunity and authorizing submission of the letter of support.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution No. 2026-21