

Press Release

Randy G. Paul, Green Party candidate for County Commissioner District 2, announces position on use of food and beverage tax money for COVID-19 relief.

There are moments during a crisis where we are given an opportunity to reflect back on our past decisions and see if they still serve their original purpose. This is one of those times.

The Food and Beverage tax should be abolished, immediately. The entire fund balance, all 7 million dollars, should be split between employees and the businesses receiving relief funds. No company should be awarded assistance without pledging that they will use at least 50% to pay their employees, immediately. Most businesses run about 50% of their expenses for payroll, so this is the only equitable thing to do. The contract needs to hold a business accountable to this payroll pledge, with the business fined or remaining money returned if a violation occurs. Minority businesses should be given priority in the selection process. The selection committee is currently made up with bankers and government officials. We need the committee to reflect our community, including renters, students and those living in poverty.

If the above suggestions are implemented, then there will be no Convention Center expansion, which is a good thing. The reason I am running for County Commissioner as a Green Party candidate is to help reduce the impact of climate change, and the Convention Center expansion makes no sense for our environment.

Let's try to learn something from this crisis. Our government knew for years that we could get hit by pandemic like the Coronavirus, and did nothing. We have a chance now to renew our commitment to fighting climate change by repealing the Food and Beverage tax, cancel the Convention Center expansion, put 7 million dollars (not 2 million) towards our citizens and businesses who are suffering terribly, and make our environment a higher priority over business profits.

A crisis will test who we are as individuals and as a community. It can force all of us to re-evaluate our priorities. We will certainly survive this crisis, the only question is how long it will take, and how we will come out on the other side. Will we use this time to recommit to each other and the planet we all need to survive, or will we opt for short term solutions that we will only regret later?

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