

STATE OF FLORIDA

IN RE: MEETING OF THE GOVERNOR AND
CABINET

Original
C & N Reporters

CABINET MEMBERS: GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS
ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHLEY MOODY
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER JIMMY
PATRONIS
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE
NIKKI FRIED

DATE: February 26, 2019

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INDEX

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

PAGE NO.

Vote - Secretary of Department Of Environmental Protection	4
Interview and appointment - Commissioner Office of Financial Regulation	15
Department of Law Enforcement By Commissioner Swearingen	37
Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund By Secretary Noah Valenstein	42
State Board of Administration By Executive Director Williams	58

* * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Good morning, and welcome to the February 26th meeting of the Governor and Cabinet.

To begin our meeting, I'd like to recognize Darrick McGhee to lead this morning's invocation. Please remain standing after the invocation for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Emma Holt Upton.

(WHEREUPON, THE INVOCATION WAS GIVEN AND THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE SAID).

* * * *

1 **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**
2 **APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY**

3
4 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Our next item is
5 the Department of Environmental Protection,
6 appointment of the Secretary. Two weeks ago I
7 announced that I was appointing Noah Valenstein to
8 the position of Secretary, and we will ask the
9 Cabinet for their concurrence at today's meeting.

10 I know that Noah has been available for
11 individual interviews. Today we will conduct a
12 public interview before voting on the appointment.

13 Noah, if you'd like to approach the podium.
14 You're there. I will just start by asking you to
15 just recap, you know, what you've done since
16 January 8th in terms of tackling issues with our
17 environment.

18 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Thank you, Governor;
19 and thank you, General Moody, CFO Patronis, and
20 Commissioner Fried.

21 It's obviously been very busy since
22 January 1st, and we appreciate your leadership,
23 Governor, with the rollout of the executive order
24 and a commitment of \$2.5 billion to really focus on
25 doing more now for water quality in Florida. And

1 we've already started working on that executive
2 order and doing some restructuring at the
3 Department of Environmental Protection.

4 And there are a number of elements of it. I
5 always talk about three pillars: The first of
6 which being -- making sure we've got science-based
7 data that's in a form that any member of the public
8 can identify with, learn from, and hold the Agency
9 accountable. And that was some of the key
10 structural changes at the Agency, was to create an
11 Office of Environmental Accountability and
12 Transparency headed by a Chief Science Officer.
13 We've posted that position and are getting a lot of
14 interest on it.

15 That position would help advise the Agency on
16 science matters, would report directly to myself,
17 and would also with that office work with a newly
18 created Blue Green Algae Task Force. And, again, I
19 see it as a hub of making sure we never forget as
20 an agency that the environment is the foundation
21 for our economy; it's the way of life here in
22 Florida. And if we can't ensure as an agency that
23 we're providing data and allowing the public to
24 engage and hold us transparent -- hold us
25 accountable in a way that a mother and father can

1 engage in, a business owner can engage in, I don't
2 think we'll achieve the level of sustainability we
3 want and the environment or the product that our
4 employees at the Agency demand.

5 And so we've been incredibly busy. We've also
6 been working on revamping our resilience office.
7 We've just restructured to rename it the Office of
8 Resilience and Coastal Protection; and then as a
9 whole, starting the process to look at areas that
10 have received recurring algal blooms, whether it
11 was from releases from Lake Okeechobee or otherwise
12 in Florida.

13 So many of our water quality plans in statute
14 had 20-year goals, scientifically found, led. But
15 when you're a community and you're seeing that
16 impact on a daily basis, clearly that timeline is
17 not good enough. And so this is starting the
18 public process through that Blue Green Algae Task
19 Force to begin looking at: How can we do more?
20 How can we stand next to our community, let them be
21 part of a vision of a sustainable Florida and
22 achieve that today?

23 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any Cabinet members have
24 questions?

25 Jimmy.

1 CFO PATRONIS: Actually, thank you, Governor.
2 I have a softball for Secretary Valenstein.

3 Where in your tenure of service do you think
4 you've shown poor judgment?

5 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Accepting this job.

6 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Is that a softball
7 because there are so many, or is that a softball
8 because --

9 CFO PATRONIS: No, he knows where I'm going
10 with this.

11 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: I believe the answer is
12 I excelled in judgment when I married a Seminole.

13 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Oh, you had my vote.

14 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: I believe it's the
15 answer --

16 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: And are you
17 supporting -- are you supporting this nomination?

18 CFO PATRONIS: I think -- I think his choice
19 and, you know, where he has decided to build a
20 family with a Seminole is showing actually
21 excellent judgment. My line of questioning is
22 because the attire he has on today is just -- it's
23 just pretty atrocious. So considering the Governor
24 did not go to the University of Florida, I think
25 it's important to point this out publicly also.

1 COMMISSIONER FRIED: But the other two Cabinet
2 members on the bench are.

3 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: We very much
4 appreciate your attire. Thank you, sir.

5 CFO PATRONIS: No, in all sincerity, Governor,
6 I just wanted to thank Noah for service to the
7 state. You have kind of been thrown in the deep
8 end of the pool with a number of extraordinary
9 circumstances over the last year plus of your
10 service as DEP secretary, but you served in so many
11 other capacities, whether it be over at Suwannee or
12 in EOG, have been sensitive to the needs of the
13 state in ensuring that the citizens of the state
14 are served well and in a way that makes us an
15 attractive place to move. And if you don't have a
16 beautiful place to live in, people will not move
17 here.

18 I think it all -- you know, it's great to have
19 a great economy, but you still have to have a
20 beautiful place; and I think your leadership shows
21 that you're sensitive to that and also making the
22 strides to help at least ensure that future
23 generations have a beautiful place too.

24 Great pick, Governor.

25 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Governor, if I may.

1 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Sure.

2 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: And thank you for
3 making the time to meet with us personally prior to
4 today's meeting so that we could question you about
5 your previous service. My family has been in
6 Florida for five generations, and your passion for
7 conserving our natural resources is evident when
8 anyone meets you. So thank you very much for
9 standing ready to answer our questions and for
10 being here today.

11 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Thank you, General.

12 COMMISSIONER FRIED: And, Governor.

13 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Yep.

14 COMMISSIONER FRIED: I'm encouraged by the
15 conversations that we too had in my office this
16 week. I believe that we share the commitment to
17 finding ways for DEP and my department to work
18 together on water quality issues. You've assured
19 me that the environmental and water issues will be
20 a priority in this administration. Cooperation is
21 key. It's the only way that we're actually going
22 to get things accomplished. And the people of our
23 state are counting on us to get this done for our
24 state.

25 We've got some major work and major issues to

1 address, like red tide, toxic blue green algae,
2 Lake Okeechobee releases, and so much more. We've
3 got to take a serious look at all state levels and
4 to make plans for the threat of climate change and
5 human contributions to our climate crisis.

6 I'm hopeful that we take this all very
7 seriously as much as we do in the Department of
8 Agriculture, and I look forward to watching you and
9 DEP's actions closely on these issues. Our next
10 generation's fate relies on us doing this together
11 and making strides for our state. So thank you.

12 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: I look forward to
13 working together, Commissioner.

14 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any other questions from
15 the Cabinet?

16 (NO RESPONSE).

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there any other public
18 comment regarding the appointment? We have some.

19 MS. UPTON: Good morning. I'm Anna Upton on
20 behalf of the Everglades Foundation.

21 The Everglades Foundation fully supports
22 Noah Valenstein as Secretary of the Department of
23 Environmental Protection. He's transformed DEP by
24 bringing in more transparency, accountability, and
25 stakeholder engagement. He has the experience and

1 the temperament to tackle the environmental
2 challenges facing our state. He's approachable,
3 he's straight with you, and his knowledge of the
4 Everglades is bar none.

5 Florida's environment and America's Everglades
6 has a friend in Noah Valenstein. So on behalf of
7 the Everglades Foundation, we ask that you approve
8 the appointment of Noah Valenstein as Secretary of
9 the Department of Environmental Protection.

10 And I also submitted to your Cabinet Aides
11 letters of support from the National Parks
12 Conservation Association, the Everglades Trust,
13 and the Captains for Clean Water who also support
14 Noah Valenstein as DEP Secretary.

15 Thank you.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Great.

17 Any more? Yes.

18 MS. WRAITHMELL: Good morning. I'm Julie
19 Wraithmell, Executive Director of Audubon Florida.

20 As you know, Audubon is the state's oldest
21 conservation organization. We've been around since
22 1900. We've seen a few Secretaries of DEP in that
23 time, and I will say that we have been incredibly
24 impressed with what Noah has been able to
25 accomplish already.

1 When he took the helm at DEP, we a saw a
2 breath of fresh air, this opportunity for
3 accountability, transparency, access, as well as
4 engagement. You know, we've seen remarkable
5 progress in the culture of the Agency. Morale has
6 improved incredibly, and with that has come
7 performance.

8 I think he's a very talented leader, as well
9 as a devoted conservationist, and we really can't
10 wait to see what he's able to accomplish in an
11 administration that places such a priority on
12 addressing our water and conservation issues and
13 with such an opportunity and a savvy partner in the
14 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

15 In addition to having deep roots in the
16 Everglades, he's equally sophisticated in the ways
17 of North Florida springs and the Apalachicola
18 River, the St. John's, and the pitcher plant
19 forests of the Panhandle. So given his depth of
20 experience and knowledge of the entire State of
21 Florida, I'm not sure you could find a better
22 candidate, and we urge you to support him today.

23 Thank you.

24 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Thank you.

25 Any more public comments? Yes.

1 MS. FOOTE: Good morning. I'm Deborah Foote.
2 I'm the Government Affairs and Political Director
3 for the Sierra Club of Florida, and I just want to
4 second what our colleagues have said and encourage
5 you to make this appointment.

6 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Thank you.

7 Any more public comment?

8 (NO RESPONSE).

9 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Seeing none, is there a
10 motion to concur with the appointment of
11 Noah Valenstein as the Secretary of the Department
12 of Environmental Protection?

13 COMMISSIONER FRIED: So moved.

14 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a second?

15 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any comments or
17 objections?

18 (NO RESPONSE).

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Hearing none, the motion
20 carries.

21 Congratulations, Noah. I believe that CFO has
22 a request for our newly appointed Secretary?

23 CFO PATRONIS: Yes, sir, I do. Thank you.

24 Congratulations, Noah. And also, I just want
25 to make a motion that we just continue the same

1 salary, sir.

2 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any second?

3 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

4 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. The motion carries.

5 You want to do a photo with your family here?

6 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Thank you.

7 (APPLAUSE).

8 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: We're going to do one more
9 question from the CFO for Noah.

10 CFO PATRONIS: Thank you, Governor.

11 At the next Cabinet meeting, I just want to
12 get a status update of what's happened with the
13 recovery from your Department's jurisdiction
14 regarding Hurricane Michael.

15 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Absolutely, it will be
16 my pleasure.

17 CFO PATRONIS: Thank you, sir.

18 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Great.

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OFFICE OF FINANCIAL REGULATION**INTERVIEW AND APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER**

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4 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Our next item
5 is interviews for the Commissioner of the Office of
6 Financial Regulation. We have two interviews on
7 the agenda today: Linda Charity and Ronald Rubin.

8 Ms. Charity, would you like to approach the
9 podium for your interview? Why don't you start by
10 introducing yourself and briefly telling us why you
11 would like to serve as Commissioner.

12 MS. CHARITY: Good morning. I appreciate it.
13 Thank you very much.

14 My background, briefly, is I spent 33 years in
15 progressively responsible regulation of Florida's
16 financial institutions, and it culminated with two
17 stints as the Interim Commissioner for the Office
18 of Financial Regulation.

19 I'm a public servant. I love public service,
20 and I find that the Office provides such, you know,
21 important consumer protections that -- you know,
22 regulation is consumer protection. And that's one
23 of my main goals, is to ensure that the industries
24 are safe, sound, and run lawfully.

25 I'd like to -- why I'd like to be the

1 Commissioner, it's in my blood, it really is. I
2 have strong relationships with the federal and
3 state regulatory agencies, and with -- certainly
4 with Cabinet Affairs. I'm well versed on budget,
5 legislation, administrative issues, all from a
6 Florida perspective. And I feel like I can serve
7 the public and the Financial Service Commission to
8 a great deal, and I would look forward to working
9 with you in that capacity.

10 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Do you have a question?

11 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Good morning. Thank you
12 for being here today.

13 One of the important aspects of being
14 Commissioner and director of OFR is working with a
15 lot of our state charter banks.

16 MS. CHARITY: Correct.

17 COMMISSIONER FRIED: And one of the issues
18 here is that in our constitution -- we have medical
19 marijuana in our constitution, and we are obviously
20 a big banking situation here in our state with only
21 two banks currently banking our legal industry.
22 And I wanted to see kind of your opinion and your
23 approach to some of these state charter banks who
24 want opportunities to come into our state and have
25 access to this industry.

1 MS. CHARITY: That's an excellent question. I
2 truly believe that we have got to find a solution,
3 a banking solution for the medical marijuana
4 industry and related parties that -- it's a
5 difficult, difficult situation because of the
6 stigma that marijuana at the federal level is
7 considered a controlled drug.

8 I have worked with some of the federal
9 agencies, the State of Georgia, on finding
10 solutions. We've had these discussions about
11 finding out how we can find the solution that is
12 not only a safe and sound solution but one that
13 is -- one that is more user friendly. We have to
14 have an area where the banks do bank medical
15 marijuana and related activities. So I'm all for
16 it, absolutely.

17 CFO PATRONIS: Thank you, Governor.

18 One of the questions that's important to me is
19 you're familiar with the Department.

20 MS. CHARITY: Yes.

21 CFO PATRONIS: You're familiar with the number
22 of personnel, the budget. Tell me a little bit
23 about your philosophy of ensuring that the Office
24 realizes its full potential just in your management
25 style.

1 MS. CHARITY: Thank you. I appreciate that
2 question.

3 I am an inclusive manager. I think that I
4 have strong leadership skills and include folks in
5 on decisionmaking and, you know, tackling issues.
6 I think that being active with staff is so
7 important and, you know, having frequent meetings
8 and frequent get-togethers, having annual meetings
9 where you have face-to-face time with the staff.

10 I think that we need to look at more of a
11 risk-focused program at the OFR and spend less time
12 on what I would call parking-ticket-type issues,
13 late call reports, things like that; and spend more
14 substantive time on the bigger issues, the bad guys
15 that are out there. And I think that that's, you
16 know, exactly where we need to go.

17 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Thank you for being
18 here.

19 As you know, the Office of the Attorney
20 General, and specifically my administration, is
21 concerned with Floridians being taken advantage of
22 and being victims of fraud. Would you be committed
23 to, or do you see ways to improve the Office to
24 identify those who are violating our laws, and
25 would you be willing to work with our office to

1 make sure that they are successfully prosecuted?

2 MS. CHARITY: Absolutely. The OFR has had a
3 longstanding good working relationship with the
4 Attorney General's Office, actually with all of the
5 offices. And getting the bad guys out is very
6 important, and I think that together we can find
7 solutions.

8 Having thought about the budget, I think that
9 there is a way to shift some positions -- given the
10 dwindling number of banks, shift some positions
11 with more emphasis on the investigative side and
12 perhaps in the finance area where we have new and
13 emerging issues coming up. So I am absolutely
14 committed to it, yes.

15 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: How do you -- how would
16 you compare Florida's financial regulations to
17 other states, and is there anything we can do to
18 make Florida more attractive to get more financial
19 institutions to locate here?

20 MS. CHARITY: Well, the --Florida is a very
21 attractive state, absolutely. We were number two
22 in the de novo activity this last cycle, the de
23 novo or the new bank activity. It's attractive to
24 securities firms and mortgage lending.

25 The statutes have been revamped, Florida

1 statutes have been revamped, and they are now more
2 current and more user friendly, if you will. I
3 think that working together and working with some
4 of the trade associations is a good way to help to
5 spike interest in Florida financial issues.

6 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: What is your view and your
7 experience dealing with Fintech?

8 MS. CHARITY: Fintech? I have had some
9 experience with Fintech. It is, as you know, a new
10 and emerging issue. The Office of the Comptroller
11 of the Currency is taking the lead on regulating
12 Fintech, but it is an emerging industry that's
13 going to absolutely help support the financial
14 ability of our state. So Fintech is a new and
15 important emerging issue.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any other questions?

17 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Just one other, Governor.

18 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER FRIED: So you have been Interim
20 Commissioner twice.

21 MS. CHARITY: Correct.

22 COMMISSIONER FRIED: You know, from those two
23 previous occasions, what are some lessons that
24 you've learned as being the Interim that you would
25 take with you for a full-time commitment position?

1 MS. CHARITY: I think the leadership, being
2 the face of the Agency, is absolutely critical,
3 whether it's with our staff, whether it's with the
4 industry, legislature, Financial Service
5 Commission. That is one of my areas that I really
6 truly believe is so important, having a strong face
7 and voice for the Agency, and I would be committed
8 to absolutely doing that.

9 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any other questions?

10 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: No, sir.

11 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Thank you,
12 Ms. Charity.

13 MS. CHARITY: Thank you very much.

14 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Mr. Rubin, would you like
15 to approach the podium for your interview? And can
16 you just start by introducing yourself and briefly
17 telling us why you'd like to serve as the
18 Commissioner?

19 MR. RUBIN: Good morning. Yes. So I'm Ron
20 Rubin. Currently I live in Washington, D.C., but I
21 did live in Florida for six years during the '90s,
22 and my parents have lived in South Florida since
23 the mid '80s actually. This is a great state, and
24 some of my best memories are from living here.

25 I'd like to start by saying that this is

1 really a great honor, and thank you all. And I'd
2 also like to say I hope it's not too late to
3 congratulate all of you on your election victories
4 and to really say that the people of Florida are so
5 lucky to have such an extraordinary young,
6 talented, smart group of leaders; and I think the
7 future for this state is great. So, also, I'd like
8 to say that I have never felt so old.

9 I've watched some of the Governor's meetings,
10 and I know they move very quickly, so I'm going to
11 skip the part about telling you how wonderful I am.
12 And I'm going to ask the two questions of myself --
13 or answer the two questions that I would ask if I
14 were sitting where you're sitting.

15 First of all is: What do you feel the mission
16 of this office is? And I cannot express it better
17 than to quote my favorite quote from Ronald Reagan.
18 It's almost 50 years ago. He said: Free men
19 engaged in free enterprise build better nations
20 with more and better goods and services, higher
21 wages and higher standards of living for more
22 people, but free enterprise is not a hunting
23 license.

24 And that statement contains basically the two
25 goals -- the two goals that I feel are not only

1 important for this office but really for most
2 regulators. The first is stopping fraud, stopping
3 crime. People work hard for their money, and they
4 deserve to know that when they put it in a bank
5 that it's going to be there; their funds are not
6 going to be depleted by hidden or unnecessary fees;
7 when they invest, that they invest with full
8 information, truthful information. And obviously
9 investing involves risks, but they want to be able
10 to calculate the risks and also feel that their
11 investment advisors or the people offering the
12 investments are honest and not looking to steal
13 their money.

14 That's basically the crime prevention, and
15 it's what, by the way, consumers, when they use
16 their credit cards, when they use whatever
17 financial consumer services know that they're
18 dealing with honest people and they're not being
19 ripped off, very simple.

20 Reagan's quote is so profound because the
21 latter part of it is saying that free enterprise is
22 not a hunting license, is the obvious part of the
23 statement and the short part of the statement,
24 because the long part of the statement is
25 expressing how much benefit people get from free

1 enterprise and free markets.

2 I'm a University of Chicago MBA; I'm a -- you
3 know, the epicenter of the free market. I spent
4 two years reading in every class down to
5 advertising, reading studies of how when the
6 government tried to improve the free markets they
7 ended up making it worse.

8 So what that means is not trying to influence
9 prices that are offered, not trying to pick
10 products that you, as a government employee or as a
11 bureaucrat, believe are better products; and most
12 importantly, not having any more regulation and any
13 more costly regulation than is necessary because
14 people forget that any expense that's borne by
15 business, extra expense, unnecessary expense is
16 going to end up costing the consumer and making
17 products more expensive, in other words, hurting
18 the people who you are ostensibly trying to help.

19 The second question that I would ask is: What
20 are your top goals for the Office? And not
21 surprisingly, the two would fall into those two
22 categories of my answer to the first question.

23 When I was in the SEC's Miami office, I was
24 surprised at how many of the issues I dealt with
25 looked more like the issues I had dealt with at the

1 Broward State Attorney's Office previously, in
2 other words, really just straight-up crime. And
3 the victims were more often than not senior
4 citizens. And recently I read that financial crime
5 against senior citizens has doubled in the last
6 five years.

7 CFO PATRONIS: True.

8 MR. RUBIN: These are the most cruel, most
9 heartbreaking stories. You know, you have people
10 who are aging, they're -- you know, as you get
11 older, life gets tougher; but also, the criminals
12 prey on these people because they are lonely, they
13 need a friend, they are willing to believe people
14 who come to them, and really their goal is just to
15 take their money.

16 And so, you know, this -- that would be my
17 first priority. And lately, for myself, you know,
18 my parents, who just celebrated their 60th
19 anniversary, are in their 80s; and so for me it's
20 very personal. Those kinds of crimes would be my
21 top priority.

22 The second goal would be to encourage, as the
23 Governor mentioned, financial, Fintech, and all the
24 new developing businesses to be in Florida.

25 Florida has a great advantage from the recent tax

1 bill that low-tax states or no-tax states like
2 Florida are now more attractive and they're no
3 longer subsidizing a high tax in spend states. And
4 so this is a great time and a great opportunity to
5 attract those businesses, you know, get them to
6 move down here.

7 You know, there was originally Silicon Valley,
8 and then in New York they had Silicon Alley; and it
9 would be great to establish something equivalent to
10 that in Florida, to make Florida the place where
11 computer people, tech people want to come.

12 So having said that, I will, I guess, give it
13 to you for whatever questions you have.

14 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any questions?

15 CFO PATRONIS: Sure.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Jimmy.

17 CFO PATRONIS: Thank you, Governor.

18 Ron, thank you for being here. I think you've
19 probably picked up both a concern that I share with
20 Commissioner Fried. Last year I started off by
21 sending a letter to the Federal Reserve concerned
22 about a hundred percent cash economy business in
23 medical marijuana in the State of Florida. I
24 recently have, last month, sent a letter to the
25 White House asking the same: We need some clarity.

1 I've got concerns about -- and I'm probably
2 leading you with this question. That's probably
3 not fair. Tell me your philosophy on medical
4 marijuana banking and then also as it comes to
5 cryptocurrency.

6 MR. RUBIN: Well, you know, I mean I believe
7 in the will of the people, and it's my
8 understanding that the people of Florida
9 overwhelmingly voted to make medical marijuana
10 legal.

11 One of the articles that I published in the
12 Wall Street Journal in 2014 dealt with Operation
13 Choke Point, which was at the time the Obama
14 administration's attempt to go after disfavored
15 businesses by choking off their access to banking
16 services and financial services. And I think that
17 that is -- I completely disapprove of that, and
18 that goes for, for example, whether it's medical
19 marijuana, whether it's gun dealers. You know,
20 that's just a backhanded dirty way of going after
21 businesses that you don't like, and I don't approve
22 of it.

23 And so on the flip side, you know, not having
24 good banking services creates very bad problems.
25 You know, first of all, you're driving it to cash,

1 which invites crime, basically; but, also, it hurts
2 revenues of the state. And so, you know, it's
3 important as much as possible to get the proper
4 banking services, again, whether it be from medical
5 marijuana or any other legal business in the state.

6 Bitcoin is -- I have to admit I have read a
7 lot about Bitcoin and I kind of understand it. One
8 of my friends is an SEC commissioner who is very
9 much against regulating cryptocurrencies, and she
10 tells me I don't fully understand it; and so I, you
11 know, want to learn more, whatever I can.

12 But my feeling is -- my first reaction to it
13 is that basically money is whatever people believe
14 money is. So if -- you know, it used to be that
15 money was backed by gold, so there was something
16 backing it; and then we're no longer on the gold
17 standard, but it's backed by the full faith and
18 credit of the United States. And so people are
19 fully confident that that money is worth something.

20 Bitcoin, in my mind, I'm still not certain
21 that there's -- basically that you can't have a run
22 on Bitcoin; that there is nothing to support it in
23 a way that people will not lose confidence in it.
24 And so, you know, until I could be completely
25 confident that you're not -- it's not going to

1 cause the equivalent of a run on the bank, I would
2 be reluctant to go to Bitcoin; but when I feel like
3 I am confident in that, then I will.

4 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: You have an extensive
5 experience in regulatory agencies and government
6 service. You spent time with the SEC. You also
7 spent time with the Consumer Financial Protection
8 Bureau. How did that experience do you believe
9 prepared you -- prepare you for this role? In
10 addition to that, how do you believe that has made
11 you aware of the limited power that government is
12 given in executing their duties?

13 MR. RUBIN: Well, it's hard to, in kind of a
14 quick sum, by basically summarize a lifetime of
15 experiences. I think a lot of times you learn the
16 most by seeing what government agencies do wrong,
17 what kind of mistakes they make. Civil --
18 certainly civil agencies and civil enforcement is
19 very tough to go after the really bad criminals.
20 You end up catching the -- or run the risk of
21 creating a lot more regulation and expense for the
22 good guys who are trying to be good and then the
23 bad guys just thumb their finger at you -- or thumb
24 their nose at you.

25 You know, one of the cases that I dealt with

1 at the SEC was I prosecuted Steve Madden, and my
2 cooperating witness was Jordan Belfort who is known
3 as the Wolf of Wall Street. And he told me the
4 only thing that he really thought about was
5 basically the FBI and the criminal authorities.
6 NASD, which is now FINRA, and the SEC really were
7 not much of a concern for him.

8 So your Attorney General's office I think
9 would be very, very important to be working with
10 the Office of Financial Regulation and to, you
11 know, at the earliest possible moment when we think
12 that we have someone who is a bad criminal offender
13 to bring in, basically that the heavy guns and all
14 of the powers that you have that this office does
15 not have to put those people in jail; and most
16 importantly, by the way, just to stop the crime,
17 whatever it is. The first goal is to stop it, and
18 then the second goal is to put the people in jail
19 so that it doesn't happen again.

20 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: How would you evaluate
21 some of the recent changes stemming from Dodd-Frank
22 in terms of the effect on community banks?

23 MR. RUBIN: You know, there's kind of an irony
24 of that. Everybody in Washington talks about how
25 much they love community banks, how much they love

1 smaller banks. And they pass the Dodd-Frank Act,
2 which by putting so much compliance burden on the
3 smaller banks, put more of them out of business
4 than, you know, had ever been before.

5 And so community banks have the real -- the
6 difference between the community banks and large
7 national banks is that they know their customers.
8 And when they're given by, for example, the
9 Dodd-Frank Act, you know, the ability to pay
10 qualified mortgage regulations, that boxed them in
11 and don't give them the opportunities to say, well,
12 yes, under the standard regulations, this person
13 who wants to buy a home or this business would not
14 qualify, but we know them, and we've worked with
15 them, and we are willing to take that risk with
16 them.

17 So, you know, I mean I think the President's
18 deregulation initiatives have been -- after the
19 changes in the tax law, quite frankly, have been
20 the most important thing that he's done to help
21 promote business. And so I'm a big supporter of
22 community banks, and anything that we can do to try
23 to help them get back on kind of the stronger
24 foothold that they were before the Dodd-Frank, I
25 would be in favor of.

1 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: There's, you know,
2 different things going on in the political culture
3 about, you know, finance, whether it's good even, I
4 mean do you think it would be beneficial for
5 Florida to welcome more financial institutions, it
6 would be good for our economy?

7 MR. RUBIN: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. You
8 know, I know that Florida has a Wild Card Act which
9 says that Florida's state chartered banks should be
10 able to do everything that national banks are able
11 to do.

12 But in the Wild Card Act, it says that the
13 Office of Financial Regulation has to sign off on
14 it; and that can be a big obstacle or a small
15 obstacle. Bureaucrats are very good at saying no,
16 because when you say no, you can't get in trouble
17 for -- you know, in the one in a thousand chance
18 that something goes wrong, you're on the hook. But
19 saying yes is really what's the better option if
20 you can get to yes and get to enable, for example,
21 in this case, to have more state chartered banks.

22 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any other questions?

23 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Governor, just kind of
24 a --

25 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Nikki.

1 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Thank you.

2 Just kind of a follow-up on that. You know,
3 obviously your experience in the financial world is
4 extensive. What about as far as like leadership
5 and accountability and accessibility to our state
6 charter banks? Because that's one of the issues
7 that we have seen in years past, is that the actual
8 client, which are our small banks, have been not
9 able to have as much access or interaction with the
10 OFR. And so I want to kind of get your opinion on
11 your interaction with, you know, the people that
12 you're leading as well as the people that are in
13 theory your clients.

14 MR. RUBIN: And the simple answer to that
15 question is that there -- any lack of access is
16 inexcusable. I mean banks need to be able to know
17 that this office is there to serve them as well as
18 the people; and when they need help, when they
19 need -- when they have questions, there should be
20 somebody -- I mean my goal would be to have
21 somebody call them back and be able to answer their
22 questions within a day, if possible, maybe two
23 days.

24 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any more?

25 (NO RESPONSE).

1 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Well, thank
2 you, Mr. Rubin, appreciate it.

3 MR. RUBIN: Thank you.

4 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: So having conducted these
5 interviews today -- and I know we've been able all
6 to research the different candidates' backgrounds
7 and experience. Is there a motion on either of the
8 candidates?

9 CFO PATRONIS: Governor, I have a motion.

10 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay.

11 CFO PATRONIS: I move that we appoint Ron
12 Rubin as Commissioner of the Office of Financial
13 Regulation with a salary that matches the Insurance
14 Commissioner.

15 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a second?

16 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: I'll second it.

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: I'll concur as well.

18 Any comments or objections?

19 COMMISSIONER FRIED: I just have a comment,
20 Governor.

21 This is obviously such an important position
22 to get right. It's OFR's responsibility to ensure
23 a safe financial marketplace for those living and
24 doing business in Florida and to protect our
25 citizens from scams, fraudulent business practices,

1 and all the bad actors. The Commissioner is in a
2 unique position to be the watchdog for Florida's
3 financial service providers, and I'm sure that this
4 candidate will be taking that very seriously.

5 I've been encouraged by what I've heard by
6 Mr. Rubin, both not today but also in our office
7 yesterday. His stints at the Federal Securities
8 Exchange Commission, of the Financial Insurance
9 Regulatory Authority, and the Consumer Financial
10 Protection Bureau makes him uniquely qualified for
11 this position, and so I will concur on his
12 appointment.

13 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. The motion carries.

14 So we need to set the salary for the new
15 position. Is there a motion to set the salary as
16 the same as the Commissioner of Insurance
17 regulation? I believe there is.

18 CFO PATRONIS: Sure.

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a second?

20 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

21 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Any
22 objections?

23 (NO RESPONSE).

24 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Hearing none,
25 the motion carries.

So congratulations to you, Mr. Rubin.

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

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3 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: We now have FDLE. And,
4 Commissioner Swearingen, would you like to present
5 your items?

6 COMMISSIONER SWEARINGEN: Thank you, and good
7 morning.

8 I have four agenda items for you today. First
9 are the minutes from the June 13th, 2018 Cabinet
10 meeting which I respectfully submit for your
11 approval.

12 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion on the
13 item?

14 COMMISSIONER FRIED: So moved.

15 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any comments or
17 objections?

18 (NO RESPONSE).

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Hearing none, the motion
20 carries.

21 COMMISSIONER SWEARINGEN: Thank you.

22 The second item are the contracts for the
23 fourth quarter of fiscal year '17/'18 and contracts
24 for the first and second quarter of fiscal year
25 '18/'19.

1 These reports summarize all the Department's
2 contracts, leases, et cetera, over a hundred
3 thousand dollars. They were not approved by the
4 previous Cabinet because of cancelled meetings
5 towards the end of last year. I respectfully
6 submit them for your approval now.

7 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion on the
8 item?

9 COMMISSIONER FRIED: So moved.

10 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

11 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

12 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Hearing no
13 comments or objections, the motion carries.

14 Item 3.

15 COMMISSIONER SWEARINGEN: Thank you.

16 Item 3 is notice of proposed rules. Revisions
17 to nine sets of rules are being proposed. Public
18 meetings will be offered in April, and they will be
19 back in front of you for final approval in May. A
20 majority of the changes are technical or the result
21 of statutory changes.

22 11B-20 revises a form.

23 11B-27 implements special forces equivalency
24 training and makes a couple of technical fixes.

25 11B-30 updates a form to implement special

forces equivalency training.

11B-35 implements special forces equivalency training and updates a defensive tactics instructors course.

11C-6 eliminates conditional non-approvals for firearms purchases and fixes a billing loophole to prevent payment issues. This matches language in SB-7026.

11C-7 eliminates an obsolete form and implements a juvenile expunction change.

11D-9 revises definitions, requirements, procedures and forms for Byrne JAG grants.

And 11D-10 removes the requirement for bringing Hall of Fame nominees in the January Cabinet meeting.

And 11N-1 revises procedures to match current practices for the violent crime and drug control account.

I respectfully submit those for your approval.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion?

ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: So moved.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

COMMISSIONER FRIED: Second.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Hearing no comments or objection, the motion carries.

1 Item 4.

2 COMMISSIONER SWEARINGEN: Thank you, Governor.

3 Item 4 is the 2019 Florida Law Enforcement
4 Officers Hall of Fame nominees. The Hall of Fame
5 was created in 2014 through Section 265.0041
6 Florida Statutes to recognize and honor law
7 enforcement officers who put their lives on the
8 line for the safety and protection of Florida
9 citizens and visitors.

10 The first five Hall of Fame members were
11 inducted in 2016, and plaques are displayed
12 upstairs on the Plaza Level for the honorees. Each
13 year nominations are accepted from the Florida
14 Sheriffs Association, the Florida Police
15 Association, the Police Benevolent Association, the
16 Fraternal Order of Police, and the State Law
17 Enforcement Chiefs Association.

18 Ten individuals were submitted for this year's
19 class, and a selection committee identified the
20 following five nominees for your approval:
21 Charles F. DuPont, as pointed out by the Attorney
22 General earlier, he was the first duly elected
23 African-American sheriff. What was interesting is
24 this was -- his election was in 1889, and he was
25 the son of freed slaves.

1 Manuel L. Gonzalez, you'll recognize his name.
2 He was recently recognized as the Attorney
3 General's Officer of the Year -- Law Enforcement
4 Officer of the Year.

5 Paul R. Hoover.

6 Alfonso Lofton, who was the first
7 African-American FHP trooper in the state. And
8 that was in 1970, believe it or not.

9 And then James D. Sewell.

10 A reception and induction ceremony to which
11 you will be invited is scheduled here at the
12 Capitol on Saturday, May 18th. And I respectfully
13 submit these five names for your approval.

14 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion on the
15 item?

16 CFO PATRONIS: So move.

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

18 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Hearing no
20 comments or objection, the motion carries.

21 Thank you, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER SWEARINGEN: Thank you.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST FUND

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3 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Our next
4 agenda items are from BOT.

5 Noah, welcome back. Would you like to present
6 the items?

7 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Yes, Governor. Thank
8 you.

9 Good morning, again, Governor and members of
10 the Cabinet. We have six items for you this
11 morning. The last two will be presented by the
12 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

13 Item 1 is consideration of minutes from
14 November 30th and the December 4th Board of
15 Trustees meetings, and the Department would ask for
16 approval.

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion?

18 COMMISSIONER FRIED: So moved.

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

20 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

21 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Hearing no
22 comments or objections, the motion carries.

23 Item 2.

24 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Item 2 is consideration
25 of the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts 2019

1 Project Ranking List. The Florida Communities
2 Trust staff reviewed the applications, conducted
3 site visits, evaluated -- submitted reports from
4 the applicants; and then on November 29th, 2018,
5 the FCT governing board reviewed and considered
6 staff recommendations and produced a finalized
7 ranking list containing the two eligible
8 applications.

9 This ranking list is being presented to the
10 Board of Trustees for consideration today and
11 includes the Homosassa Heritage Park and Working
12 Waterfront in Citrus County and the Blue Crab Cove
13 Phase 2 in Brevard County.

14 The Department recommends approval.

15 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion on the
16 item?

17 CFO PATRONIS: So move.

18 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

19 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

20 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Second.

21 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. Hearing no
22 comments or objections, the motion carries.

23 Item 3.

24 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Thank you.

25 Item 3 -- the next two items, we have some

1 exciting land acquisitions. Item 3 is the
2 consideration of an option agreement to acquire
3 approximately 83 acres within the Wakiva Ocala
4 Greenway Florida Forever project from
5 Brian A. Richards for \$540,000.

6 The subject property consists of five
7 contiguous lake front parcels located on Lake
8 Norris, and it will connect the Seminole State
9 Forest to the Bear Track Preserve, which is owned
10 and managed by the Lake County Water Authority who
11 is also partnering with us with this acquisition
12 and who has committed approximately \$225,000 to
13 that purchase price.

14 With us today we have Julie Wraithmell,
15 Executive Director of Florida Audubon Society, who
16 would like to make a comment.

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay.

18 MS. WRAITHMELL: Thank you, Mr. Secretary and
19 Cabinet. Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida.

20 I just wanted to take a minute to say thank
21 you for taking up these items today. Florida has a
22 long history of protecting its vulnerable places,
23 without which our state simply can't function. And
24 these votes today are this Cabinet's entry into
25 that legacy.

1 As you know, our public lands are more than
2 just places for Floridians to recreate. They're
3 places for wildlife to thrive; they recharge our
4 aquifers, and protect our rivers, lakes and coasts;
5 they clean our air; they support rural economies;
6 and they sequester carbon.

7 But these two projects in particular are more
8 than just those tangible items, you know, they will
9 protect a gem-clear spring that stands out like a
10 glowing sapphire against the dark water of the
11 Withlacoochee River in North Florida and help to
12 preserve the larger Wakiva ecosystem, which is
13 critical to both Orlando area residents as well as
14 black bears.

15 And we know that by protecting these places
16 it's not just an investment in the resources within
17 the boundaries of the parcel that you're acquiring,
18 but it's important to the health of the larger
19 watershed that they occur within. We know from
20 experience that buying these places helps us to
21 protect the health of our watersheds early, rather
22 than paying more to restore them later.

23 So thank you so much for bringing these items
24 up. Audubon wholeheartedly supports both of them.
25 They are both strategic and significant, and we

1 encourage you to approve their acquisition today.
2 Thank you.

3 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion on the
4 item?

5 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Actually, Governor, we
6 have one more comment for public comment.

7 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Oh, one more comment,
8 great.

9 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Lindsay Stevens from
10 the Nature Conservancy would like to make a
11 comment --

12 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Sure.

13 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: -- both on this item
14 and the next.

15 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay.

16 MS. STEVENS: Good morning, Governor and
17 Cabinet. I really appreciate the opportunity to be
18 here morning. I'm Lindsay Stevens. I'm the Land
19 Program Manager with the Nature Conservancy here in
20 Florida. So I have the opportunity to partner with
21 state staff frequently on land acquisition
22 activities in the state. And as stated previously,
23 we're really excited to be able to work with you
24 all moving forward in partnership.

25 The two pieces of property before you today

1 may be relatively smaller in scale, but that
2 doesn't mean they're any less important. The
3 Wakiva Ocala Greenway, as you all know, is in a
4 really rapidly urbanizing part of the state; and it
5 takes a lot of tenacity and patience to put the
6 pieces of the puzzle together for that Greenway.
7 This is actually a part of the state that I'm from,
8 and I've seen it change in the past, you know, 40
9 something years that I've been around.

10 So this is just one piece of the puzzle but an
11 important piece, and it definitely moves the needle
12 towards having and building this really important
13 green connection, not only for the critters, but
14 for the people that live here too, and for our
15 economy.

16 The second piece of property, the Florida's
17 First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever Project,
18 there's a reason why this is a top-ranked project
19 in the Florida Forever program. As you know, the
20 springs in the state are really unique, not only
21 nationally but internationally. We're known for
22 the crystal blue waters, and the jewels that they
23 are. But as the land goes, so goes the water, so
24 we have to strategically protect important pieces
25 of land and control the land uses that are

1 occurring on them to ensure that our springs are
2 something that our children can enjoy, the children
3 of our children and the future generations down the
4 line.

5 So I certainly encourage you all to vote in
6 support of these two acquisitions today and to
7 also recognize and support, as I think you do,
8 the Florida Forever program and strategic
9 acquisitions moving forward in the state. And,
10 again, the Nature Conservancy looks forward to
11 working with you and appreciate the opportunity
12 to do so.

13 Thank you.

14 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Thank you.

15 Is there any other public comment?

16 (NO RESPONSE).

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Is there a motion
18 on the item?

19 COMMISSIONER FRIED: So moved.

20 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a second?

21 CFO PATRONIS: Second.

22 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Hearing no comments
23 or objection, the motion carries.

24 Item 4.

25 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Governor, Item 4 is

1 consideration of an option agreement to acquire
2 approximately 316 acres within Florida's First
3 Magnitude Springs Florida Forever Project from
4 River Era Farms, Incorporated for \$2 million.

5 This is the project that you just heard about.
6 The only other thing I would mention is I think
7 both of these projects are great demonstrations
8 about how we're adding more value to the footprint
9 we already have. Both of these projects expand
10 corridor connections. They show a connection
11 between a forest, other state management
12 properties; they show connections between multiple
13 state agencies and really show us increasing value
14 of our current green infrastructure, so the
15 Department would recommend approval.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Any public comment on this
17 one? I know we did hear one already.

18 (NO RESPONSE).

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Is there a motion
20 on the item?

21 CFO PATRONIS: So move.

22 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a second?

23 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

24 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Hearing no comments
25 or objection, the motion carries.

1 Item 5.

2 SECRETARY VALENSTEIN: Item 5 and 6 will be
3 presented by Portia Sapp from the Department of
4 Agriculture and Consumer Services.

5 MS. SAPP: Good morning, trustees.

6 Since this is the first aquaculture lease that
7 I've brought to you, I'd like to give you a little
8 bit of overview about aquaculture and the leasing
9 program in general if I may before I present the
10 items. So according to the 2013 national census of
11 aquaculture, Florida aquaculture sales totalled
12 \$77.9 million with 393 farms reporting. That
13 places Florida sixth in the nation for aquaculture
14 production.

15 There are approximately a thousand certified
16 aquaculturists right now in the state, and this is
17 probably one of the most diverse agriculture
18 industries in the state. So that production
19 includes tropical fish; corals; alligators;
20 aquatic plants; bait fish; shrimp; turtles; live
21 rock; and, of course, shellfish which we're here
22 to talk about today.

23 The national census that I just talked about
24 in 2013 placed Florida fourth in the nation in
25 production of shellfish with farming, \$19.6

1 million, which is up 68 percent from the 2005
2 values. So shellfish aquaculture in Florida is
3 growing, which you guys will see over the next
4 year.

5 The shellfish aquaculture industry began in
6 the 1980s on the east coast of Florida; and then in
7 the 1990s, the State of Florida began a targeted
8 retraining program for expanded employment
9 opportunities for the fishing industry that was
10 impacted by changing regulations.

11 So if any of you have been Cedar Key, you know
12 about the just vibrant shellfish industry there.
13 And that helped to provide them with opportunities
14 for jobs after the net ban.

15 So currently, there are 728 submerged land
16 leases in Florida for aquaculture production, and
17 that includes 2,740 acres of submerged land. About
18 720 of those are shellfish leases producing either
19 clams or oysters, and the other eight are live-rock
20 leases, so those go into the marine ornamental
21 trade. 161 of those are water column leases which
22 the Board just started approving in about 2013, so
23 it's relatively new.

24 So the typical submerged land lease only
25 allows the use of six inches off the bottom. The

1 water column lease allows use all the way to the
2 surface. And this has kind of allowed the new cage
3 culture system with oyster gear.

4 We also have 25 aquaculture use zones
5 throughout the state, and those are where we have
6 multiple aquaculture leases together in a
7 coordinated zone. So all of those aquacultures
8 can kind of work together and have additional
9 benefits, protection; they can mark their leases
10 together.

11 And in Florida, there are 6.9 million acres of
12 state-owned submerged land, and a little over a
13 million of those are in shellfish harvesting areas
14 that are either approved or conditionally approved
15 for shellfish harvesting. So as I mentioned
16 before, we have about close to 3,000 acres
17 currently under lease. Well, there are a million
18 acres that are in approved harvest areas that, you
19 know, would provide potential expansion
20 opportunities.

21 And in 2018 97.6 million aquaculture clams
22 were harvested, and that's compared to 13,000
23 wild clams. So there's just not a wild industry
24 here for clams, so aquaculture is really the
25 major producer. And aquacultured oysters,

1 808,000 pounds of aquacultured oysters were
2 harvested.

3 And as I mentioned, that industry is growing
4 very rapidly, and you'll see that today with the
5 lease applications that I'm going to present to
6 you.

7 So not only do these shellfish leases provide
8 important economic opportunities, shellfish
9 aquaculture is also really important because it
10 provides environmental benefits. Shellfish are
11 filter feeders, so they're taking phytoplankton out
12 of the water column. They can improve water
13 clarity by doing that. They can also bind nitrogen
14 phosphorous, and carbon, so they are critically
15 important.

16 So I'll move on unless you have any questions
17 about aquaculture in Florida.

18 (NO RESPONSE).

19 MS. SAPP: Okay. So Item 5 is a new
20 aquaculture submerged land lease in Manatee County.
21 Brian Rosager (phonetics) has requested a new
22 two-acre water column lease in lower Tampa Bay in
23 Manatee County in order to start his aquaculture
24 oyster business. There are currently nine
25 aquaculture leases in Manatee County, mainly

1 raising clams.

2 The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
3 and the Department of Environmental Protection's
4 Florida Coastal Office have reviewed the item and
5 had no comments. Additionally, the National Marine
6 Fisheries Service and the Army Corps of Engineers
7 have reviewed the item and determined the
8 activities are not likely to have adverse impacts
9 and are compliant with our department programmatic
10 general permit that we hold with the Army Corps.
11 So with that, staff recommends approval of this
12 item.

13 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion on the
14 item?

15 CFO PATRONIS: So move.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a second?

17 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

18 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Hearing no comments
19 or objection, the motion carries.

20 Item 6.

21 MS. SAPP: Item 6, Ryan McAndrew has
22 requested a new 4.8-acre water column lease in
23 East Bay in Santa Rosa County in order to start his
24 oyster aquaculture business. There is currently
25 only one other aquaculture lease in Santa Rosa

1 County.

2 The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
3 and the Department of Environmental Protection
4 Florida Coastal Office have reviewed the items and
5 had no comments. Additionally, the National Marine
6 Fisheries Service and the Army Corps have reviewed
7 the item and determined the activities are not
8 likely to have adverse impacts and are compliant
9 with our general programmatic permit.

10 Now this site is located in Gulf sturgeon
11 critical habitat, but the applicant is proposing to
12 use floating gear which is authorized within our
13 programmatic general permit with the Corps, so
14 staff recommends approval of this item.

15 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion?

16 CFO PATRONIS: So move.

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

18 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Second.

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Hearing no comments
20 or objection, the motion carries.

21 Item 6.

22 MS. SAPP: That was Item 6.

23 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Oh, that was six?

24 MS. SAPP: Yes.

25 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Great.

1 MS. SAPP: That concludes ours. Thank you.

2 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: There are more fishes
3 than we thought.

4 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Jimmy.

5 CFO PATRONIS: Thank you, sir.

6 I just wanted to compliment the Commissioner
7 and what y'all are advocating for. I think for
8 years coming out of the seafood industry, having
9 a sustainable resource that actually can be
10 managed, just like somebody would manage and till a
11 plot of land for a farm, this is a great way that
12 we can at least help advocate and change the whole
13 culture of how this working waterfront that we're
14 advocating for can start to grow and become more of
15 a robust -- to complement the Florida's economy.
16 So I just wanted to thank y'all for being so
17 supportive on this because it's near and dear to my
18 heart because, you know, people love Apalachicola
19 oysters. They love Florida seafood.

20 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Now it's going to be
21 Tampa Bay oysters. Did you hear that?

22 CFO PATRONIS: I saw that. You're right.

23 But it's just the more we can support this I
24 think it's just ensuring future generations can
25 enjoy it.

C & N REPORTERS
MS. SAPP: Thank you.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Great. Thank you.

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STATE BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

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3 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Our last agency on
4 the agenda is the State Board of Administration, so
5 Ash Williams is here somewhere. There he is. So
6 he's going to present four items.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILLIAMS: Good morning,
8 Governor --

9 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Good morning.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILLIAMS: -- trustees,
11 Cabinet members.

12 By way of performance update, as of last
13 night's close, 25 February, the Florida Retirement
14 System Trust Fund is up 2.2 percent, fiscal year to
15 date. That's 86 basis points ahead of target. To
16 put some numbers on that, looking back to the
17 beginning of the fiscal year, there's a change in
18 fund value of 760 million dollars down. That is
19 net of benefit payments of 4.56 billion, meaning we
20 had total investment gains of 3.8 billion.

21 Item 1, request approval of the January 29
22 meeting minutes.

23 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion?

24 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: So moved.

25 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

1 CFO PATRONIS: Second.

2 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. The motion
3 carries.

4 Item 2.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

6 Item 2 is a resolution of the SBA, a fiscal
7 determination in connection with issuing up to \$5
8 million Florida Housing Finance Corporation
9 Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Notes. This is for
10 the acquisition and rehab of a 48-unit affordable
11 housing facility in Okaloosa County, Florida.

12 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion on the
13 item?

14 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: So moved.

15 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

16 CFO PATRONIS: Second.

17 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. The motion carries.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

19 Item 3 is likewise a fiscal determination in
20 connection with the issuance of not more than \$16
21 million Florida Housing Finance Corporation
22 Multifamily Mortgage Family Bonds. This is for the
23 acquisition, construction, and equipment of a
24 116-unit affordable housing community in Broward
25 County, Florida, the Suncrest Court.

Request approval.

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GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion?

ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: So moved.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

CFO PATRONIS: Second.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. The motion carries.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

Item 4 is another fiscal determination, this one an amount not exceeding \$9 million, Florida Housing Finance Corporation Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Bonds. This is for new construction of an 88-unit affordable workforce housing facility, The Palms at Town Center in Flagler County Florida.

Request approval.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Is there a motion?

ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: So moved.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Second?

CFO PATRONIS: Second.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Okay. Hearing no comments or objection, the motion carries.

So thank you, Ash.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Does anyone have anything else today?

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(NO RESPONSE).

GOVERNOR DESANTIS: All right. That concludes today's meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12th.

(WHEREUPON, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED).

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CERTIFICATE

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STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, NANCY S. METZKE, RPR, FPR, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

DATED this 11th day of March, 2018.

NANCY S. METZKE, RPR, FPR
Court Reporter

\$	29 [1] - 58:21 29th [1] - 43:4	9
\$16 [1] - 59:20 \$225,000 [1] - 44:12 \$540,000 [1] - 44:5	3	9 [1] - 60:10 97.6 [1] - 52:21
1	3 [6] - 38:14, 38:16, 43:23, 43:25, 44:1, 59:19 3,000 [1] - 52:16 3.8 [1] - 58:20 3093 [1] - 1:22 30th [1] - 42:14 316 [1] - 49:2 32315-3093 [1] - 1:23 33 [1] - 15:14 37 [1] - 2:8 393 [1] - 50:12	A
1 [2] - 42:13, 58:21 116-unit [1] - 59:24 11B-20 [1] - 38:22 11B-27 [1] - 38:23 11B-30 [1] - 38:25 11B-35 [1] - 39:2 11C-6 [1] - 39:5 11C-7 [1] - 39:9 11D-10 [1] - 39:13 11D-9 [1] - 39:11 11N-1 [1] - 39:16 11th [1] - 62:7 12th [1] - 61:4 13,000 [1] - 52:22 13th [1] - 37:9 15 [1] - 2:6 161 [1] - 51:21 1889 [1] - 40:24 18th [1] - 41:12 19.6 [1] - 50:25 1900 [1] - 11:22 1970 [1] - 41:8 1980s [1] - 51:6 1990s [1] - 51:7 1st [1] - 4:22	4	ability [2] - 20:14, 31:9 able [10] - 11:24, 12:10, 23:9, 32:10, 33:9, 33:16, 33:21, 34:5, 46:23 absolutely [10] - 14:15, 17:16, 19:2, 19:13, 19:21, 20:13, 21:2, 21:8, 32:7 accepted [1] - 40:13 Accepting [1] - 7:5 access [5] - 12:3, 16:25, 27:15, 33:9, 33:15 accessibility [1] - 33:5 accomplish [2] - 11:25, 12:10 accomplished [1] - 9:22 according [1] - 50:10 account [1] - 39:18 Accountability [1] - 5:11 accountability [3] - 10:24, 12:3, 33:5 accountable [2] - 5:9, 5:25 achieve [2] - 6:2, 6:22 acquire [2] - 44:2, 49:1 acquiring [1] - 45:17 acquisition [5] - 44:11, 46:1, 46:21, 59:10, 59:23 acquisitions [3] - 44:1, 48:6, 48:9 acre [1] - 53:22 acres [6] - 44:3, 49:2, 51:17, 52:11, 52:16, 52:18 Act [4] - 31:1, 31:9, 32:8, 32:12 actions [1] - 10:9 active [1] - 18:6 activities [4] - 17:15, 46:22, 54:8, 55:7 activity [2] - 19:22, 19:23 actors [1] - 35:1 actual [1] - 33:7 adding [1] - 49:8 addition [2] - 12:15, 29:10 additional [1] - 52:8 Additionally [1] - 55:5 additionally [1] - 54:5 address [1] - 10:1 addressing [1] - 12:12 ADJOURNED [1] - 61:5 administration [3] - 9:20, 12:11, 18:20 Administration [2] - 2:12, 58:4 ADMINISTRATION [1] - 58:1 administration's [1] - 27:14 administrative [1] - 16:5 admit [1] - 28:6 advantage [2] - 18:21, 25:25 adverse [2] - 54:8, 55:8 advertising [1] - 24:5 advise [1] - 5:15 advisors [1] - 23:11
2	5	
2 [6] - 42:23, 42:24, 43:13, 49:4, 59:4, 59:6 2,740 [1] - 51:17 2.2 [1] - 58:14 2.5 [1] - 4:24 20-year [1] - 6:14 2005 [1] - 51:1 2013 [3] - 50:10, 50:24, 51:22 2014 [2] - 27:12, 40:5 2016 [1] - 40:11 2018 [4] - 37:9, 43:4, 52:21, 62:7 2019 [3] - 1:13, 40:3, 42:25 25 [2] - 52:4, 58:13 26 [1] - 1:13 265.0041 [1] - 40:5 26th [1] - 3:4	4 [6] - 2:4, 40:1, 40:3, 48:24, 48:25, 60:9 4.56 [1] - 58:19 4.8-acre [1] - 54:22 40 [1] - 47:8 42 [1] - 2:10 48-unit [1] - 59:10 4th [1] - 42:14	
	6	
	5 [4] - 50:1, 50:2, 53:19, 59:7 50 [1] - 22:18 58 [1] - 2:12	
	7	
	6 [5] - 50:2, 54:20, 54:21, 55:21, 55:22 6.9 [1] - 52:11 60th [1] - 25:18 68 [1] - 51:1 697-8314 [1] - 1:23	
	8	
	720 [1] - 51:18 728 [1] - 51:15 760 [1] - 58:18 77.9 [1] - 50:12	
	808,000 [1] - 53:1 80s [1] - 25:19 83 [1] - 44:3 850 [1] - 1:23 86 [1] - 58:15 88-unit [1] - 60:13 8th [1] - 4:16	

<p>advocate [1] - 56:12 advocating [2] - 56:7, 56:14 Affairs [2] - 13:2, 16:4 affordable [3] - 59:10, 59:24, 60:13 African [2] - 40:23, 41:7 African-American [2] - 40:23, 41:7 agencies [6] - 16:3, 17:9, 29:5, 29:16, 29:18, 49:13 agency [3] - 5:20, 5:22, 58:3 Agency [7] - 5:8, 5:10, 5:15, 6:4, 12:5, 21:2, 21:7 agenda [4] - 15:7, 37:8, 42:4, 58:4 aging [1] - 25:10 ago [2] - 4:6, 22:18 agreement [2] - 44:2, 49:1 Agriculture [4] - 10:8, 12:14, 42:12, 50:4 AGRICULTURE [1] - 1:11 agriculture [1] - 50:17 ahead [1] - 58:15 Aides [1] - 11:10 air [2] - 12:2, 45:5 Alfonso [1] - 41:6 Algae [2] - 5:18, 6:18 algae [1] - 10:1 algal [1] - 6:10 Allegiance [1] - 3:9 ALLEGIANCE [1] - 3:11 Alley [1] - 26:8 alligators [1] - 50:19 allowed [1] - 52:2 allowing [1] - 5:23 allows [2] - 51:25, 52:1 almost [1] - 22:18 America's [1] - 11:5 American [2] - 40:23, 41:7 amount [1] - 60:10 AND [3] - 1:4, 3:10, 15:2 Anna [1] - 10:19 anniversary [1] - 25:19 announced [1] - 4:7 annual [1] - 18:8 answer [7] - 7:11, 7:15, 9:9, 22:13, 24:22, 33:14, 33:21 Apalachicola [2] - 12:17, 56:18 APPLAUSE [1] - 14:7 applicant [1] - 55:11 applicants [1] - 43:4 applications [3] - 43:2, 43:8, 53:5 appoint [1] - 34:11 appointed [1] - 13:22 appointing [1] - 4:7 appointment [8] - 2:5, 4:6, 4:12, 10:18, 11:8, 13:5, 13:10, 35:12 APPOINTMENT [2] - 4:2, 15:2 appreciate [7] - 4:22, 8:4, 15:12, 18:1, 34:2, 46:17, 48:11 approach [4] - 4:13, 15:8, 16:23, 21:15 approachable [1] - 11:2</p>	<p>approval [14] - 37:11, 38:6, 38:19, 39:19, 40:20, 41:13, 42:16, 43:14, 49:15, 54:11, 55:14, 58:21, 60:1, 60:15 approvals [1] - 39:5 approve [3] - 11:7, 27:21, 46:1 approved [4] - 38:3, 52:14, 52:18 approving [1] - 51:22 April [1] - 38:18 aquaculture [19] - 50:6, 50:8, 50:11, 50:13, 51:2, 51:5, 51:16, 52:4, 52:6, 52:21, 52:24, 53:9, 53:17, 53:20, 53:23, 53:25, 54:24, 54:25 aquacultured [2] - 52:25, 53:1 aquacultures [1] - 52:7 aquaculturists [1] - 50:16 aquatic [1] - 50:20 aquifers [1] - 45:4 area [3] - 17:14, 19:12, 45:13 areas [4] - 6:9, 21:5, 52:13, 52:18 Army [3] - 54:6, 54:10, 55:6 articles [1] - 27:11 Ash [2] - 58:5, 60:22 ASHLEY [1] - 1:9 aspects [1] - 16:13 Association [5] - 11:12, 40:14, 40:15, 40:17 associations [1] - 20:4 assured [1] - 9:18 atrocious [1] - 7:23 attempt [1] - 27:14 attire [2] - 7:22, 8:4 ATTORNEY [28] - 1:9, 7:6, 7:16, 8:3, 8:25, 9:2, 13:15, 14:3, 18:17, 21:10, 29:4, 34:16, 35:20, 37:15, 38:11, 39:21, 41:18, 42:20, 43:19, 49:23, 54:17, 55:18, 56:2, 56:20, 58:24, 59:14, 60:3, 60:17 Attorney [5] - 18:19, 19:4, 30:8, 40:21, 41:2 Attorney's [1] - 25:1 attract [1] - 26:5 attractive [5] - 8:15, 19:18, 19:21, 19:23, 26:2 Audubon [5] - 11:19, 11:20, 44:15, 44:19, 45:24 authorities [1] - 30:5 Authority [2] - 35:9, 44:10 authorized [2] - 55:12, 62:5 available [1] - 4:10 aware [1] - 29:11</p>	<p>bait [1] - 50:20 ban [1] - 51:14 bank [4] - 17:14, 19:23, 23:4, 29:1 banking [7] - 16:20, 16:21, 17:3, 27:4, 27:15, 27:24, 28:4 banks [19] - 16:15, 16:21, 16:23, 17:14, 19:10, 30:22, 30:25, 31:1, 31:3, 31:5, 31:6, 31:7, 31:22, 32:9, 32:10, 32:21, 33:6, 33:8, 33:16 bar [1] - 11:4 based [1] - 5:6 basis [2] - 6:16, 58:15 Bay [3] - 53:22, 54:23, 56:21 Bear [1] - 44:9 bears [1] - 45:14 beautiful [3] - 8:16, 8:20, 8:23 become [1] - 56:14 began [2] - 51:5, 51:7 begin [2] - 3:6, 6:19 beginning [1] - 58:17 behalf [2] - 10:20, 11:6 Belfort [1] - 30:2 bench [1] - 8:2 beneficial [1] - 32:4 benefit [2] - 23:25, 58:19 benefits [2] - 52:9, 53:10 Benevolent [1] - 40:15 best [1] - 21:24 better [6] - 12:21, 22:16, 22:19, 22:20, 24:11, 32:19 between [3] - 31:6, 49:11, 49:12 big [3] - 16:20, 31:21, 32:14 bigger [1] - 18:14 bill [1] - 26:1 billing [1] - 39:6 billion [3] - 4:24, 58:19, 58:20 bind [1] - 53:13 bit [2] - 17:22, 50:8 Bitcoin [5] - 28:6, 28:7, 28:20, 28:22, 29:2 black [1] - 45:14 blood [1] - 16:1 blooms [1] - 6:10 blue [2] - 10:1, 47:22 Blue [3] - 5:18, 6:18, 43:12 board [2] - 2:9, 43:5 BOARD [2] - 42:1, 58:1 Board [5] - 2:12, 42:14, 43:10, 51:22, 58:4 Bonds [2] - 59:22, 60:12 borne [1] - 24:14 BOT [1] - 42:4 bottom [1] - 51:25 boundaries [1] - 45:17 BOX [1] - 1:22 boxed [1] - 31:10 breath [1] - 12:2 Brevard [1] - 43:13 Brian [2] - 44:5, 53:21</p>
B		
<p>backed [2] - 28:15, 28:17 background [1] - 15:14 backgrounds [1] - 34:6 backhanded [1] - 27:20 backing [1] - 28:16 bad [7] - 18:14, 19:5, 27:24, 29:19, 29:23, 30:12, 35:1</p>		

<p>briefly [3] - 15:10, 15:14, 21:16 bring [1] - 30:13 bringing [3] - 10:24, 39:14, 45:23 brought [1] - 50:7 Broward [2] - 25:1, 59:24 budget [3] - 16:4, 17:22, 19:8 build [2] - 7:19, 22:19 building [1] - 47:12 burden [1] - 31:2 Bureau [2] - 29:8, 35:10 bureaucrat [1] - 24:11 bureaucrats [1] - 32:15 business [11] - 6:1, 24:15, 26:22, 28:5, 31:3, 31:13, 31:21, 34:24, 34:25, 53:24, 54:24 businesses [4] - 25:24, 26:5, 27:15, 27:21 busy [2] - 4:21, 6:5 buy [1] - 31:13 buying [1] - 45:20 BY [1] - 1:17 Byrne [1] - 39:12</p>	<p>ceremony [1] - 10:15 certain [1] - 28:20 certainly [3] - 16:3, 29:16, 48:5 CERTIFICATE [1] - 62:1 certified [1] - 50:15 certify [1] - 62:5 cetera [1] - 38:2 CFC [30] - 4:19, 7:1, 7:9, 7:18, 8:5, 13:21, 13:23, 14:9, 14:10, 14:17, 17:17, 17:21, 25:7, 26:15, 26:17, 34:9, 34:11, 35:18, 41:16, 43:17, 48:21, 49:21, 54:15, 55:16, 56:5, 56:22, 59:1, 59:16, 60:5, 60:19 challenges [1] - 11:2 chance [1] - 32:17 change [5] - 10:4, 39:10, 47:8, 56:12, 58:17 changes [5] - 5:10, 30:21, 31:19, 38:20, 38:21 changing [1] - 51:10 Charity [3] - 15:7, 15:8, 21:12 CHARITY [11] - 15:12, 16:16, 17:1, 17:20, 18:1, 19:2, 19:20, 20:8, 20:21, 21:1, 21:13 Charles [1] - 40:21 charter [3] - 16:15, 16:23, 33:6 chartered [2] - 32:9, 32:21 Chicago [1] - 24:2 CHIEF [1] - 1:10 Chief [1] - 5:12 Chiefs [1] - 40:17 children [3] - 48:2, 48:3 choice [1] - 7:18 Choke [1] - 27:13 choking [1] - 27:15 circumstances [1] - 8:9 citizens [5] - 8:13, 25:4, 25:5, 34:25, 40:9 Citrus [1] - 43:12 civil [3] - 29:17, 29:18 clams [5] - 51:19, 52:21, 52:23, 52:24, 54:1 clarity [2] - 26:25, 53:13 class [2] - 24:4, 40:19 clean [1] - 45:5 Clean [1] - 11:13 clear [1] - 45:9 clearly [1] - 6:16 client [1] - 33:8 clients [1] - 33:13 climate [2] - 10:4, 10:5 close [2] - 52:16, 58:13 closely [1] - 10:9 Club [1] - 13:3 coast [1] - 51:6 Coastal [3] - 6:8, 54:4, 55:4 coasts [1] - 45:4 colleagues [1] - 13:4 column [5] - 51:21, 52:1, 53:12, 53:22,</p>	<p>54:22 coming [2] - 19:13, 56:8 comment [10] - 10:18, 13:7, 34:19, 44:16, 46:6, 46:7, 46:11, 48:15, 49:16 comments [16] - 12:25, 13:16, 34:18, 37:16, 38:13, 39:25, 41:20, 42:22, 43:22, 48:22, 49:24, 54:5, 54:18, 55:5, 55:19, 60:20 Commission [5] - 16:7, 21:5, 35:8, 54:2, 55:2 COMMISSIONER [27] - 1:11, 7:5, 7:13, 8:1, 9:12, 9:14, 13:13, 15:2, 16:11, 16:17, 20:17, 20:19, 20:22, 32:23, 33:1, 34:19, 37:6, 37:14, 37:21, 38:9, 38:15, 39:23, 40:2, 41:22, 42:18, 43:20, 48:19 Commissioner [19] - 2:5, 2:8, 4:20, 10:13, 15:5, 15:11, 15:17, 16:1, 16:14, 20:20, 21:18, 26:20, 34:12, 34:14, 35:1, 35:16, 37:4, 41:21, 56:6 commissioner [1] - 28:8 commitment [3] - 4:24, 9:16, 20:25 committed [4] - 18:22, 19:14, 21:7, 44:12 committee [1] - 40:19 Communities [1] - 43:1 community [8] - 6:15, 6:20, 30:22, 30:25, 31:5, 31:6, 31:22, 59:24 compare [1] - 19:16 compared [1] - 52:22 complement [1] - 56:15 complete [1] - 62:6 completely [2] - 27:17, 28:24 compliance [1] - 31:2 compliant [2] - 54:9, 55:8 compliment [1] - 56:6 Comptroller [1] - 20:10 computer [1] - 26:11 concern [2] - 26:19, 30:7 concerned [2] - 18:21, 26:21 concerns [1] - 27:1 concludes [2] - 56:1, 61:2 concur [3] - 13:10, 34:17, 35:11 concurrence [1] - 4:9 conditional [1] - 39:5 conditionally [1] - 52:14 conduct [1] - 4:11 conducted [2] - 34:4, 43:2 confidence [1] - 28:23 confident [3] - 28:19, 28:25, 29:3 congratulate [1] - 22:3 Congratulations [1] - 13:21 congratulations [2] - 13:24, 36:1 connect [1] - 44:8 connection [4] - 47:13, 49:10, 59:7, 59:20 connections [2] - 49:10, 49:12 Conservancy [3] - 46:10, 46:19, 48:10 conservation [2] - 11:21, 12:12 Conservation [3] - 11:12, 54:2, 55:2</p>
C		
<p>Cabinet [15] - 3:5, 4:9, 6:23, 8:1, 10:15, 11:10, 14:11, 16:4, 37:9, 38:4, 39:15, 42:10, 44:19, 46:17, 58:11 CABINET [3] - 1:4, 1:9, 1:14 Cabinet's [1] - 44:24 cage [1] - 52:2 calculate [1] - 23:10 cancelled [1] - 38:4 candidate [2] - 12:22, 35:4 candidates [1] - 34:8 candidates' [1] - 34:6 candnreporters.com [1] - 1:24 cannot [1] - 22:16 capacities [1] - 8:11 capacity [1] - 16:9 Capitol [1] - 41:12 CAPITOL [1] - 1:15 Captains [1] - 11:13 carbon [2] - 45:6, 53:14 Card [2] - 32:8, 32:12 cards [1] - 23:16 carries [18] - 13:20, 14:4, 35:13, 35:25, 37:20, 38:13, 39:25, 41:20, 42:22, 43:22, 48:23, 49:25, 54:19, 55:20, 59:3, 59:17, 60:7, 60:21 case [1] - 32:21 cases [1] - 29:25 cash [2] - 26:22, 27:25 catching [1] - 29:20 categories [1] - 24:22 Cedar [1] - 51:11 celebrated [1] - 25:18 census [2] - 50:10, 50:23 Center [1] - 60:14</p>	<p>ceremony [1] - 10:15 certain [1] - 28:20 certainly [3] - 16:3, 29:16, 48:5 CERTIFICATE [1] - 62:1 certified [1] - 50:15 certify [1] - 62:5 cetera [1] - 38:2 CFC [30] - 4:19, 7:1, 7:9, 7:18, 8:5, 13:21, 13:23, 14:9, 14:10, 14:17, 17:17, 17:21, 25:7, 26:15, 26:17, 34:9, 34:11, 35:18, 41:16, 43:17, 48:21, 49:21, 54:15, 55:16, 56:5, 56:22, 59:1, 59:16, 60:5, 60:19 challenges [1] - 11:2 chance [1] - 32:17 change [5] - 10:4, 39:10, 47:8, 56:12, 58:17 changes [5] - 5:10, 30:21, 31:19, 38:20, 38:21 changing [1] - 51:10 Charity [3] - 15:7, 15:8, 21:12 CHARITY [11] - 15:12, 16:16, 17:1, 17:20, 18:1, 19:2, 19:20, 20:8, 20:21, 21:1, 21:13 Charles [1] - 40:21 charter [3] - 16:15, 16:23, 33:6 chartered [2] - 32:9, 32:21 Chicago [1] - 24:2 CHIEF [1] - 1:10 Chief [1] - 5:12 Chiefs [1] - 40:17 children [3] - 48:2, 48:3 choice [1] - 7:18 Choke [1] - 27:13 choking [1] - 27:15 circumstances [1] - 8:9 citizens [5] - 8:13, 25:4, 25:5, 34:25, 40:9 Citrus [1] - 43:12 civil [3] - 29:17, 29:18 clams [5] - 51:19, 52:21, 52:23, 52:24, 54:1 clarity [2] - 26:25, 53:13 class [2] - 24:4, 40:19 clean [1] - 45:5 Clean [1] - 11:13 clear [1] - 45:9 clearly [1] - 6:16 client [1] - 33:8 clients [1] - 33:13 climate [2] - 10:4, 10:5 close [2] - 52:16, 58:13 closely [1] - 10:9 Club [1] - 13:3 coast [1] - 51:6 Coastal [3] - 6:8, 54:4, 55:4 coasts [1] - 45:4 colleagues [1] - 13:4 column [5] - 51:21, 52:1, 53:12, 53:22,</p>	<p>54:22 coming [2] - 19:13, 56:8 comment [10] - 10:18, 13:7, 34:19, 44:16, 46:6, 46:7, 46:11, 48:15, 49:16 comments [16] - 12:25, 13:16, 34:18, 37:16, 38:13, 39:25, 41:20, 42:22, 43:22, 48:22, 49:24, 54:5, 54:18, 55:5, 55:19, 60:20 Commission [5] - 16:7, 21:5, 35:8, 54:2, 55:2 COMMISSIONER [27] - 1:11, 7:5, 7:13, 8:1, 9:12, 9:14, 13:13, 15:2, 16:11, 16:17, 20:17, 20:19, 20:22, 32:23, 33:1, 34:19, 37:6, 37:14, 37:21, 38:9, 38:15, 39:23, 40:2, 41:22, 42:18, 43:20, 48:19 Commissioner [19] - 2:5, 2:8, 4:20, 10:13, 15:5, 15:11, 15:17, 16:1, 16:14, 20:20, 21:18, 26:20, 34:12, 34:14, 35:1, 35:16, 37:4, 41:21, 56:6 commissioner [1] - 28:8 commitment [3] - 4:24, 9:16, 20:25 committed [4] - 18:22, 19:14, 21:7, 44:12 committee [1] - 40:19 Communities [1] - 43:1 community [8] - 6:15, 6:20, 30:22, 30:25, 31:5, 31:6, 31:22, 59:24 compare [1] - 19:16 compared [1] - 52:22 complement [1] - 56:15 complete [1] - 62:6 completely [2] - 27:17, 28:24 compliance [1] - 31:2 compliant [2] - 54:9, 55:8 compliment [1] - 56:6 Comptroller [1] - 20:10 computer [1] - 26:11 concern [2] - 26:19, 30:7 concerned [2] - 18:21, 26:21 concerns [1] - 27:1 concludes [2] - 56:1, 61:2 concur [3] - 13:10, 34:17, 35:11 concurrence [1] - 4:9 conditional [1] - 39:5 conditionally [1] - 52:14 conduct [1] - 4:11 conducted [2] - 34:4, 43:2 confidence [1] - 28:23 confident [3] - 28:19, 28:25, 29:3 congratulate [1] - 22:3 Congratulations [1] - 13:21 congratulations [2] - 13:24, 36:1 connect [1] - 44:8 connection [4] - 47:13, 49:10, 59:7, 59:20 connections [2] - 49:10, 49:12 Conservancy [3] - 46:10, 46:19, 48:10 conservation [2] - 11:21, 12:12 Conservation [3] - 11:12, 54:2, 55:2</p>

<p>conservationist ^[1] - 12:9 conserving ^[1] - 9:7 consideration ^[5] - 42:13, 42:24, 43:10, 44:2, 49:1 considered ^[2] - 17:7, 43:5 considering ^[1] - 7:23 consists ^[1] - 44:6 constitution ^[2] - 16:18, 16:19 construction ^[2] - 59:23, 60:12 Consumer ^[5] - 12:14, 29:7, 35:9, 42:12, 50:4 consumer ^[4] - 15:21, 15:22, 23:17, 24:16 consumers ^[1] - 23:15 containing ^[1] - 43:7 contains ^[1] - 22:24 contiguous ^[1] - 44:7 continue ^[1] - 13:25 contracts ^[3] - 37:22, 37:23, 38:2 contributions ^[1] - 10:5 control ^[2] - 39:17, 47:25 controlled ^[1] - 17:7 conversations ^[1] - 9:15 cooperating ^[1] - 30:2 cooperation ^[1] - 9:20 coordinated ^[1] - 52:7 corals ^[1] - 50:19 Corporation ^[3] - 59:8, 59:21, 60:11 Corps ^[4] - 54:6, 54:10, 55:6, 55:13 correct ^[2] - 16:16, 20:21 corridor ^[1] - 49:10 costing ^[1] - 24:16 costly ^[1] - 24:13 counting ^[1] - 9:23 County ^[11] - 43:12, 43:13, 44:10, 53:20, 53:23, 53:25, 54:23, 55:1, 59:11, 59:25, 60:14 COUNTY ^[1] - 62:3 couple ^[1] - 38:24 course ^[2] - 39:4, 50:21 Court ^[2] - 59:25, 62:11 COURT ^[1] - 1:17 Cove ^[1] - 43:12 Crab ^[1] - 43:12 create ^[1] - 5:10 created ^[2] - 5:18, 40:5 creates ^[1] - 27:24 creating ^[1] - 29:21 credit ^[2] - 23:16, 28:18 crime ^[7] - 23:3, 23:14, 25:2, 25:4, 28:1, 30:16, 39:17 crimes ^[1] - 25:20 criminal ^[2] - 30:5, 30:12 criminals ^[2] - 25:11, 29:19 crisis ^[1] - 10:5 critical ^[3] - 21:2, 45:13, 55:11 critically ^[1] - 53:14 critters ^[1] - 47:13 cruel ^[1] - 25:8</p>	<p>cryptocurrencies ^[1] - 28:9 cryptocurrency ^[1] - 27:5 crystal ^[1] - 47:22 culminated ^[1] - 15:16 culture ^[4] - 12:5, 32:2, 52:3, 56:13 Currency ^[1] - 20:11 current ^[3] - 20:2, 39:16, 49:14 customers ^[1] - 31:7 cycle ^[1] - 19:22</p>	<p>39:22, 39:24, 41:14, 41:17, 41:19, 42:3, 42:17, 42:19, 42:21, 43:15, 43:18, 43:21, 44:17, 46:3, 46:7, 46:12, 46:15, 48:14, 48:17, 48:20, 48:22, 49:16, 49:19, 49:22, 49:24, 54:13, 54:16, 54:18, 55:15, 55:17, 55:19, 55:23, 55:25, 56:4, 57:2, 58:3, 58:9, 58:23, 58:25, 59:2, 59:12, 59:15, 59:17, 60:2, 60:4, 60:6, 60:16, 60:18, 60:20, 60:24, 61:2</p>
D		
	<p>D.C. ^[1] - 21:20 daily ^[1] - 6:16 dark ^[1] - 45:10 Darrick ^[1] - 3:7 data ^[2] - 5:7, 5:23 date ^[1] - 58:15 DATE ^[1] - 1:13 DATED ^[1] - 62:7 days ^[1] - 33:23 de ^[2] - 19:22 deal ^[1] - 16:8 dealers ^[1] - 27:19 dealing ^[2] - 20:7, 23:18 dealt ^[4] - 24:24, 24:25, 27:12, 29:25 dear ^[1] - 56:17 Deborah ^[1] - 13:1 December ^[1] - 42:14 decided ^[1] - 7:19 decisionmaking ^[1] - 18:5 deep ^[2] - 8:7, 12:15 defensive ^[1] - 39:3 definitely ^[1] - 47:11 definitions ^[1] - 39:11 demand ^[1] - 6:4 demonstrations ^[1] - 49:7 DEP ^[6] - 8:10, 9:17, 10:23, 11:14, 11:22, 12:1 DEP's ^[1] - 10:9 department ^[2] - 9:17, 54:9 Department ^[17] - 2:4, 2:7, 4:5, 5:3, 10:7, 10:22, 11:9, 12:14, 13:11, 17:19, 42:12, 42:15, 43:14, 49:15, 50:3, 54:3, 55:3 DEPARTMENT ^[2] - 4:1, 37:1 Department's ^[2] - 14:13, 38:1 depleted ^[1] - 23:6 depth ^[1] - 12:19 deregulation ^[1] - 31:18 DESANTIS ^[103] - 1:9, 3:3, 4:4, 6:23, 9:1, 9:13, 10:14, 10:17, 11:16, 12:24, 13:6, 13:9, 13:14, 13:16, 13:19, 14:2, 14:4, 14:8, 14:18, 15:4, 16:10, 19:15, 20:6, 20:16, 20:18, 21:9, 21:11, 21:14, 26:14, 26:16, 30:20, 32:1, 32:22, 32:25, 33:24, 34:1, 34:4, 34:10, 34:15, 34:17, 35:13, 35:19, 35:21, 35:24, 37:3, 37:12, 37:16, 37:19, 38:7, 38:10, 38:12, 39:20,</p>	<p>deserve ^[1] - 23:4 determination ^[3] - 59:7, 59:19, 60:9 determined ^[2] - 54:7, 55:7 developing ^[1] - 25:24 devoted ^[1] - 12:9 difference ^[1] - 31:6 different ^[2] - 32:2, 34:6 difficult ^[2] - 17:5 directly ^[1] - 5:16 Director ^[4] - 2:12, 11:19, 13:2, 44:15 director ^[1] - 16:14 DIRECTOR ^[6] - 58:7, 58:10, 59:5, 59:18, 60:8, 60:23 dirty ^[1] - 27:20 disapprove ^[1] - 27:17 discussions ^[1] - 17:10 disfavored ^[1] - 27:14 displayed ^[1] - 40:11 diverse ^[1] - 50:17 Dodd ^[4] - 30:21, 31:1, 31:9, 31:24 Dodd-Frank ^[4] - 30:21, 31:1, 31:9, 31:24 dollars ^[2] - 38:3, 58:18 done ^[3] - 4:15, 9:23, 31:20 doubled ^[1] - 25:5 down ^[4] - 24:4, 26:6, 48:3, 58:18 driving ^[1] - 27:25 drug ^[2] - 17:7, 39:17 duly ^[1] - 40:22 DuPont ^[1] - 40:21 during ^[1] - 21:21 duties ^[1] - 29:12 dwindling ^[1] - 19:10</p>
E		
		<p>earliest ^[1] - 30:11 early ^[1] - 45:21 East ^[1] - 54:23 east ^[1] - 51:6 economic ^[1] - 53:8 economies ^[1] - 45:5 economy ^[6] - 5:21, 8:19, 26:22, 32:6, 47:15, 56:15 ecosystem ^[1] - 45:12 effect ^[1] - 30:22 eight ^[1] - 51:19 either ^[3] - 34:7, 51:18, 52:14 elected ^[1] - 40:22</p>

<p>election [2] - 22:3, 40:24 elements [1] - 5:4 eligible [1] - 43:7 eliminates [2] - 39:5, 39:9 emerging [4] - 19:13, 20:10, 20:12, 20:15 Emma [1] - 3:9 emphasis [1] - 19:11 employee [1] - 24:10 employees [1] - 6:4 employment [1] - 51:8 enable [1] - 32:20 encourage [4] - 13:4, 25:22, 46:1, 48:5 encouraged [2] - 9:14, 35:5 end [4] - 8:8, 24:16, 29:20, 38:5 ended [1] - 24:7 Enforcement [4] - 2:7, 40:3, 40:17, 41:3 ENFORCEMENT [1] - 37:1 enforcement [2] - 29:18, 40:7 engage [3] - 5:24, 6:1 engaged [1] - 22:19 engagement [2] - 10:25, 12:4 Engineers [1] - 54:6 enjoy [2] - 48:2, 56:25 ensure [5] - 5:22, 8:22, 15:23, 34:22, 48:1 ensuring [3] - 8:13, 17:23, 56:24 enterprise [4] - 22:19, 22:22, 23:21, 24:1 entire [1] - 12:20 entry [1] - 44:24 environment [4] - 4:17, 5:20, 6:3, 11:5 Environmental [9] - 2:4, 4:5, 5:3, 5:11, 10:23, 11:9, 13:12, 54:3, 55:3 environmental [3] - 9:19, 11:1, 53:10 ENVIRONMENTAL [1] - 4:1 EOG [1] - 8:12 epicenter [1] - 24:3 equally [1] - 12:16 equipment [1] - 59:23 equivalency [3] - 38:23, 39:1, 39:2 equivalent [2] - 26:9, 29:1 Era [1] - 49:4 establish [1] - 26:9 et [1] - 38:2 evaluate [1] - 30:20 evaluated [1] - 43:3 Everglades [7] - 10:20, 10:21, 11:4, 11:5, 11:7, 11:12, 12:16 evident [1] - 9:7 exactly [1] - 18:16 example [3] - 27:18, 31:8, 32:20 exceeding [1] - 60:10 excelled [1] - 7:12 excellent [2] - 7:21, 17:1 Exchange [1] - 35:8 excited [1] - 46:23 exciting [1] - 44:1</p>	<p>executing [1] - 29:12 Executive [3] - 2:12, 11:19, 44:15 executive [2] - 4:23, 5:1 EXECUTIVE [6] - 58:7, 58:10, 59:5, 59:18, 60:8, 60:23 expand [1] - 49:9 expanded [1] - 51:8 expansion [1] - 52:19 expense [4] - 24:14, 24:15, 29:21 expensive [1] - 24:17 experience [9] - 10:25, 12:20, 20:7, 20:9, 29:5, 29:8, 33:3, 34:7, 45:20 experiences [1] - 29:15 express [1] - 22:16 expressing [1] - 23:25 expunction [1] - 39:10 extensive [2] - 29:4, 33:4 extra [1] - 24:15 extraordinary [2] - 8:8, 22:5</p>	<p>Financial [11] - 2:6, 15:6, 15:18, 16:7, 21:4, 29:7, 30:10, 32:13, 34:12, 35:8, 35:9 financial [13] - 15:16, 19:16, 19:18, 20:5, 20:13, 23:17, 25:4, 25:23, 27:16, 32:5, 33:3, 34:23, 35:3 finger [1] - 29:23 FINRA [1] - 30:6 Fintech [6] - 20:7, 20:8, 20:9, 20:12, 20:14, 25:23 firearms [1] - 39:6 firms [1] - 19:24 First [3] - 37:8, 47:17, 49:2 first [13] - 5:5, 22:15, 23:2, 24:22, 25:17, 27:25, 28:12, 30:17, 37:24, 40:10, 40:22, 41:6, 50:6 fiscal [7] - 37:23, 37:24, 58:14, 58:17, 59:6, 59:19, 60:9 Fish [2] - 54:2, 55:2 fish [2] - 50:19, 50:20 Fisheries [2] - 54:6, 55:6 fishes [1] - 56:2 fishing [1] - 51:9 five [6] - 9:6, 25:6, 40:10, 40:20, 41:13, 44:6 fixes [2] - 38:24, 39:6 Flagler [1] - 60:14 flip [1] - 27:23 floating [1] - 55:12 FLORIDA [5] - 1:1, 1:15, 1:23, 37:1, 62:3 Florida [63] - 4:25, 5:22, 6:12, 6:21, 7:24, 9:6, 11:19, 12:17, 12:21, 13:3, 16:6, 19:18, 19:20, 19:25, 20:5, 21:21, 21:22, 22:4, 25:24, 25:25, 26:2, 26:10, 26:23, 27:8, 32:5, 32:8, 34:24, 40:3, 40:6, 40:8, 40:13, 40:14, 43:1, 44:4, 44:15, 44:19, 44:21, 45:11, 46:20, 47:17, 47:19, 48:8, 49:3, 50:11, 50:13, 50:24, 51:2, 51:6, 51:7, 51:16, 52:11, 53:17, 54:4, 55:4, 56:19, 58:13, 59:8, 59:11, 59:21, 59:25, 60:10, 60:14 Florida's [8] - 11:5, 15:15, 19:16, 32:9, 35:2, 47:16, 49:2, 56:15 Floridians [2] - 18:21, 45:2 focus [1] - 4:24 focused [1] - 18:11 folks [1] - 18:4 follow [1] - 33:2 follow-up [1] - 33:2 following [1] - 40:20 FOOTE [1] - 13:1 Foote [1] - 13:1 foothold [1] - 31:24 footprint [1] - 49:8 Force [2] - 5:18, 6:19 forces [3] - 38:23, 39:1, 39:2 foregoing [1] - 62:6 Forest [1] - 44:9 forest [1] - 49:11</p>
F		
	<p>face [4] - 18:9, 21:2, 21:6 face-to-face [1] - 18:9 facility [2] - 59:11, 60:13 facing [1] - 11:2 fair [1] - 27:3 faith [1] - 28:17 fall [1] - 24:21 Fame [4] - 39:14, 40:4, 40:10 familiar [2] - 17:19, 17:21 Family [1] - 59:22 family [3] - 7:20, 9:5, 14:5 far [1] - 33:4 farm [1] - 56:11 farming [1] - 50:25 Farms [1] - 49:4 farms [1] - 50:12 fate [1] - 10:10 father [1] - 5:25 favor [1] - 31:25 favorite [1] - 22:17 FBI [1] - 30:5 FCT [1] - 43:5 FDLE [1] - 37:3 February [1] - 1:13, 3:4, 58:13 federal [3] - 10:2, 17:6, 17:8 Federal [2] - 20:21, 35:7 feeders [1] - 53:11 fees [1] - 23:6 felt [1] - 22:8 few [1] - 41:22 FHP [1] - 41:7 filter [1] - 53:11 final [1] - 35:10 finalized [1] - 43:5 finance [2] - 19:12, 32:3 Finance [3] - 59:2, 59:21, 60:11 FINANCIAL [2] - 1:10, 15:1</p>	

<p>forests [1] - 12:19 Forever [5] - 44:4, 47:17, 47:19, 48:8, 49:3 forget [2] - 5:19, 24:14 form [4] - 5:7, 38:22, 38:25, 39:9 forms [1] - 39:12 forward [6] - 10:8, 10:12, 16:8, 46:24, 48:9, 48:10 foundation [1] - 5:20 Foundation [3] - 10:20, 10:21, 11:7 four [2] - 37:8, 58:6 fourth [2] - 37:23, 50:24 FPR [3] - 1:17, 62:5, 62:11 Frank [4] - 30:21, 31:1, 31:9, 31:24 frankly [1] - 31:19 Fraternal [1] - 40:16 fraud [2] - 18:22, 23:2 fraudulent [1] - 34:25 free [8] - 22:18, 22:19, 22:22, 23:21, 23:25, 24:1, 24:3, 24:6 freed [1] - 40:25 frequent [2] - 18:7, 18:8 frequently [1] - 46:21 fresh [1] - 12:2 Fried [2] - 4:20, 26:20 FRIED [21] - 1:11, 7:5, 7:13, 8:1, 9:12, 9:14, 13:13, 16:11, 16:17, 20:17, 20:19, 20:22, 32:23, 33:1, 34:19, 37:14, 38:9, 39:23, 42:18, 43:20, 48:19 friend [2] - 11:6, 25:13 friendly [2] - 17:13, 20:2 friends [1] - 28:8 front [2] - 38:19, 44:7 full [4] - 17:24, 20:25, 23:7, 28:17 full-time [1] - 20:25 fully [3] - 10:21, 28:10, 28:19 function [1] - 44:23 fund [1] - 58:18 FUND [1] - 42:1 Fund [2] - 2:10, 58:14 funds [1] - 23:5 future [4] - 8:22, 22:7, 48:3, 56:24</p>	<p>generations [4] - 8:23, 9:6, 48:3, 56:24 Georgia [1] - 17:9 get-togethers [1] - 18:8 GIVEN [1] - 3:10 given [4] - 12:19, 19:9, 29:12, 31:8 glowing [1] - 45:10 goal [5] - 25:14, 25:22, 30:17, 30:18, 33:20 goals [5] - 6:14, 15:23, 22:25, 24:20 gold [2] - 28:15, 28:16 Gonzalez [1] - 41:1 goods [1] - 22:20 governing [1] - 43:5 Government [1] - 13:2 government [5] - 24:6, 24:10, 29:5, 29:11, 29:16 GOVERNOR [104] - 1:4, 1:9, 3:3, 4:4, 6:23, 9:1, 9:13, 10:14, 10:17, 11:16, 12:24, 13:6, 13:9, 13:14, 13:16, 13:19, 14:2, 14:4, 14:8, 14:18, 15:4, 16:10, 19:15, 20:6, 20:16, 20:18, 21:9, 21:11, 21:14, 26:14, 26:16, 30:20, 32:1, 32:22, 32:25, 33:24, 34:1, 34:4, 34:10, 34:15, 34:17, 35:13, 35:19, 35:21, 35:24, 37:3, 37:12, 37:16, 37:19, 38:7, 38:10, 38:12, 39:20, 39:22, 39:24, 41:14, 41:17, 41:19, 42:3, 42:17, 42:19, 42:21, 43:15, 43:18, 43:21, 44:17, 46:3, 46:7, 46:12, 46:15, 48:14, 48:17, 48:20, 48:22, 49:16, 49:19, 49:22, 49:24, 54:13, 54:16, 54:18, 55:15, 55:17, 55:19, 55:23, 55:25, 56:4, 57:2, 58:3, 58:9, 58:23, 58:25, 59:2, 59:12, 59:15, 59:17, 60:2, 60:4, 60:6, 60:16, 60:18, 60:20, 60:24, 61:2 Governor [24] - 3:4, 4:18, 4:23, 7:1, 7:23, 8:5, 8:24, 8:25, 9:12, 14:10, 17:17, 20:17, 25:23, 26:17, 32:23, 34:9, 34:20, 40:2, 42:7, 42:9, 46:5, 46:16, 48:25, 58:8 Governor's [1] - 22:9 grants [1] - 39:12 great [16] - 8:18, 8:19, 8:24, 11:16, 14:18, 16:8, 21:23, 22:1, 22:7, 25:25, 26:4, 26:9, 46:8, 49:7, 56:11 Great [2] - 55:25, 57:2 Green [2] - 5:18, 6:18 green [3] - 10:1, 47:13, 49:14 Greenway [3] - 44:4, 47:3, 47:6 group [1] - 22:6 grow [1] - 56:14 growing [2] - 51:3, 53:3 guess [1] - 26:12 Gulf [1] - 55:10 gun [1] - 27:19 guns [1] - 30:13 guys [5] - 18:14, 19:5, 29:22, 29:23, 51:3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>habitat [1] - 55:11 Hall [4] - 39:14, 40:4, 40:10 hard [2] - 23:3, 29:13 harvest [1] - 52:18 harvested [2] - 52:22, 53:2 harvesting [2] - 52:13, 52:15 headed [1] - 5:12 health [2] - 45:18, 45:21 hear [2] - 49:17, 56:21 heard [2] - 35:5, 49:5 Hearing [7] - 37:19, 41:19, 42:21, 49:24, 54:18, 55:19, 60:20 hearing [6] - 13:19, 35:24, 38:12, 39:24, 43:21, 48:22 heart [1] - 56:18 heartbreaking [1] - 25:9 heavy [1] - 30:13 helm [1] - 12:1 help [10] - 5:15, 8:22, 20:4, 20:13, 24:18, 31:20, 31:23, 33:18, 45:11, 56:12 helped [1] - 51:13 helps [1] - 45:20 Heritage [1] - 43:11 hidden [1] - 23:6 high [1] - 26:3 higher [2] - 22:20, 22:21 history [1] - 44:22 hold [4] - 5:8, 5:24, 54:10 Holt [1] - 3:9 home [1] - 31:13 Homosassa [1] - 43:11 honest [2] - 23:12, 23:18 honor [2] - 22:1, 40:6 honorees [1] - 40:12 hook [1] - 32:18 Hoover [1] - 41:5 hope [1] - 22:2 hopeful [1] - 10:6 House [1] - 26:25 Housing [3] - 59:8, 59:21, 60:11 housing [3] - 59:11, 59:24, 60:13 hub [1] - 5:19 human [1] - 10:5 hundred [2] - 26:22, 38:2 hunting [2] - 22:22, 23:22 Hurricane [1] - 14:14 hurting [1] - 24:17 hurts [1] - 28:1</p>
G		
<p>gains [1] - 58:20 gear [2] - 52:3, 55:12 gem [1] - 45:9 gem-clear [1] - 45:9 GENERAL [28] - 1:9, 7:6, 7:16, 8:3, 8:25, 9:2, 13:15, 14:3, 18:17, 21:10, 29:4, 34:16, 35:20, 37:15, 38:11, 39:21, 41:18, 42:20, 43:19, 49:23, 54:17, 55:18, 56:2, 56:20, 58:24, 59:14, 60:3, 60:17 general [4] - 50:9, 54:10, 55:9, 55:13 General [4] - 4:19, 9:11, 18:20, 40:22 General's [3] - 19:4, 30:8, 41:3 generation's [1] - 10:10</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>identified [1] - 40:19 identify [2] - 5:8, 18:24 impact [1] - 6:16 impacted [1] - 51:10 impacts [2] - 54:8, 55:8</p>

<p>implement [1] - 38:25 implements [3] - 38:23, 39:2, 39:10 important [21] - 7:25, 15:21, 16:13, 17:18, 18:7, 19:6, 20:15, 21:6, 23:1, 28:3, 30:9, 31:20, 34:21, 45:18, 47:2, 47:11, 47:12, 47:24, 53:8, 53:9, 53:15 importantly [2] - 24:12, 30:16 impressed [1] - 11:24 improve [3] - 18:23, 24:6, 53:12 improved [1] - 12:6 Improvement [1] - 2:10 IMPROVEMENT [1] - 42:1 IN [1] - 1:4 inches [1] - 51:25 include [1] - 18:4 includes [3] - 43:11, 50:19, 51:17 inclusive [1] - 18:3 Incorporated [1] - 49:4 increasing [1] - 49:13 incredibly [3] - 6:5, 11:23, 12:6 INDEX [1] - 2:1 individual [1] - 4:11 individuals [1] - 40:18 inducted [1] - 40:11 induction [1] - 41:10 industries [2] - 15:23, 50:18 industry [11] - 16:21, 16:25, 17:4, 20:12, 21:4, 51:5, 51:9, 51:12, 52:23, 53:3, 56:8 inexcusable [1] - 33:16 influence [1] - 24:8 information [2] - 23:8 infrastructure [1] - 49:14 initiatives [1] - 31:18 institutions [3] - 15:16, 19:19, 32:5 instructors [1] - 39:4 Insurance [3] - 34:13, 35:8, 35:16 interaction [2] - 33:9, 33:11 interest [2] - 5:14, 20:5 interesting [1] - 40:23 Interim [3] - 15:17, 20:19, 20:24 Internal [1] - 2:9 INTERNAL [1] - 42:1 internationally [1] - 47:21 interview [3] - 4:12, 15:9, 21:15 Interview [1] - 2:5 INTERVIEW [1] - 15:2 interviews [4] - 4:11, 15:5, 15:6, 34:5 introducing [2] - 15:10, 21:16 invest [2] - 23:7 investigative [1] - 19:11 investing [1] - 23:9 investment [3] - 23:11, 45:16, 58:20 investments [1] - 23:12 invited [1] - 41:11 invites [1] - 28:1 invocation [2] - 3:7, 3:8 INVOCATION [1] - 3:10 involves [1] - 23:9</p>	<p>irony [1] - 30:23 issuance [1] - 59:20 issue [2] - 20:10, 20:15 issues [17] - 4:16, 9:18, 9:19, 9:25, 10:9, 12:12, 16:5, 16:17, 18:5, 18:12, 18:14, 19:13, 20:5, 24:24, 24:25, 33:6, 39:7 issuing [1] - 59:7 Item [23] - 38:14, 38:16, 40:1, 40:3, 42:13, 42:23, 42:24, 43:23, 43:25, 48:24, 48:25; 50:1, 50:2, 53:19, 54:20, 54:21, 55:21, 55:22, 58:21, 59:4, 59:6, 59:19, 60:9 item [19] - 4:4, 15:4, 37:13, 37:22, 38:8, 41:15, 43:16, 44:1, 46:4, 46:13, 48:18, 49:20, 54:4, 54:7, 54:12, 54:14, 55:7, 55:14, 59:13 items [12] - 37:5, 37:8, 42:4, 42:6, 42:10, 43:25, 44:21, 45:8, 45:23, 50:10, 55:4, 58:6</p>	<p>51:15, 51:17, 51:24, 52:12, 53:20, 56:11 Land [1] - 46:18 lands [1] - 45:1 language [1] - 39:7 large [1] - 31:6 larger [2] - 45:12, 45:18 last [9] - 8:9, 19:22, 25:5, 26:20, 26:24, 38:5, 42:11, 58:3, 58:12 late [2] - 18:13, 22:2 lately [1] - 25:17 latter [1] - 23:21 Law [4] - 2:7, 40:3, 40:16, 41:3 LAW [1] - 37:1 law [2] - 31:19, 40:6 lawfully [1] - 15:24 laws [1] - 18:24 lead [2] - 3:7, 20:11 leader [1] - 12:8 leaders [1] - 22:6 leadership [5] - 4:22, 8:20, 18:4, 21:1, 33:4 leading [2] - 27:2, 33:12 learn [3] - 5:8, 28:11, 29:15 learned [1] - 20:24 lease [9] - 50:6, 51:24, 52:1, 52:17, 53:5, 53:20, 53:22, 54:22, 54:25 leases [9] - 38:2, 51:16, 51:18, 51:20, 51:21, 52:6, 52:9, 53:7, 53:25 leasing [1] - 50:8 least [2] - 8:22, 56:12 led [2] - 3:9, 6:14 legacy [1] - 44:25 legal [3] - 16:21, 27:10, 28:5 legislation [1] - 16:5 legislature [1] - 21:4 lending [1] - 19:24 LEON [1] - 62:3 less [2] - 18:11, 47:2 lessons [1] - 20:23 letter [2] - 26:21, 26:24 letters [1] - 11:11 Level [1] - 40:12 LEVEL [1] - 1:15 level [2] - 6:2, 17:6 levels [1] - 10:3 license [2] - 22:23, 23:22 life [2] - 5:21, 25:11 lifetime [1] - 29:14 likely [2] - 54:8, 55:8 likewise [1] - 59:19 limited [1] - 29:11 Linda [1] - 15:7 Lindsay [2] - 46:9, 46:18 line [3] - 7:21, 40:8, 48:4 list [2] - 43:7, 43:9 List [1] - 43:1 live [6] - 8:16, 21:20, 21:21, 47:14, 50:20, 51:19</p>
<p>irony [1] - 30:23 issuance [1] - 59:20 issue [2] - 20:10, 20:15 issues [17] - 4:16, 9:18, 9:19, 9:25, 10:9, 12:12, 16:5, 16:17, 18:5, 18:12, 18:14, 19:13, 20:5, 24:24, 24:25, 33:6, 39:7 issuing [1] - 59:7 Item [23] - 38:14, 38:16, 40:1, 40:3, 42:13, 42:23, 42:24, 43:23, 43:25, 48:24, 48:25; 50:1, 50:2, 53:19, 54:20, 54:21, 55:21, 55:22, 58:21, 59:4, 59:6, 59:19, 60:9 item [19] - 4:4, 15:4, 37:13, 37:22, 38:8, 41:15, 43:16, 44:1, 46:4, 46:13, 48:18, 49:20, 54:4, 54:7, 54:12, 54:14, 55:7, 55:14, 59:13 items [12] - 37:5, 37:8, 42:4, 42:6, 42:10, 43:25, 44:21, 45:8, 45:23, 50:10, 55:4, 58:6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">J</p> <p>JAG [1] - 39:12 jail [2] - 30:15, 30:18 James [1] - 41:9 January [4] - 4:16, 4:22, 39:14, 58:21 jewels [1] - 47:22 Jimmy [3] - 6:25, 26:16, 56:4 JIMMY [1] - 1:10 job [1] - 7:5 jobs [1] - 51:14 John's [1] - 12:18 Jordan [1] - 30:2 Journal [1] - 27:12 judgment [3] - 7:4, 7:12, 7:21 Julie [3] - 11:18, 44:14, 44:19 June [1] - 37:9 jurisdiction [1] - 14:13 juvenile [1] - 39:10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">J</p> <p>JAG [1] - 39:12 jail [2] - 30:15, 30:18 James [1] - 41:9 January [4] - 4:16, 4:22, 39:14, 58:21 jewels [1] - 47:22 Jimmy [3] - 6:25, 26:16, 56:4 JIMMY [1] - 1:10 job [1] - 7:5 jobs [1] - 51:14 John's [1] - 12:18 Jordan [1] - 30:2 Journal [1] - 27:12 judgment [3] - 7:4, 7:12, 7:21 Julie [3] - 11:18, 44:14, 44:19 June [1] - 37:9 jurisdiction [1] - 14:13 juvenile [1] - 39:10</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>key [2] - 5:9, 9:21 Key [1] - 51:11 kind [12] - 8:7, 16:22, 28:7, 29:13, 29:17, 30:23, 31:23, 32:23, 33:2, 33:10, 52:2, 52:8 kinds [1] - 25:20 knowledge [2] - 11:3, 12:20 known [2] - 30:2, 47:21 knows [1] - 7:9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>key [2] - 5:9, 9:21 Key [1] - 51:11 kind [12] - 8:7, 16:22, 28:7, 29:13, 29:17, 30:23, 31:23, 32:23, 33:2, 33:10, 52:2, 52:8 kinds [1] - 25:20 knowledge [2] - 11:3, 12:20 known [2] - 30:2, 47:21 knows [1] - 7:9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>key [2] - 5:9, 9:21 Key [1] - 51:11 kind [12] - 8:7, 16:22, 28:7, 29:13, 29:17, 30:23, 31:23, 32:23, 33:2, 33:10, 52:2, 52:8 kinds [1] - 25:20 knowledge [2] - 11:3, 12:20 known [2] - 30:2, 47:21 knows [1] - 7:9</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>lack [1] - 33:15 lake [1] - 44:7 Lake [4] - 6:11, 10:2, 44:7, 44:10 lakes [1] - 45:4 land [11] - 44:1, 46:21, 47:23, 47:25,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>lack [1] - 33:15 lake [1] - 44:7 Lake [4] - 6:11, 10:2, 44:7, 44:10 lakes [1] - 45:4 land [11] - 44:1, 46:21, 47:23, 47:25,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>lack [1] - 33:15 lake [1] - 44:7 Lake [4] - 6:11, 10:2, 44:7, 44:10 lakes [1] - 45:4 land [11] - 44:1, 46:21, 47:23, 47:25,</p>

<p>live-rock [1] - 51:19 lived [1] - 21:22 lives [1] - 40:7 living [3] - 21:24, 22:21, 34:23 locate [1] - 19:19 located [2] - 44:7, 55:10 LOCATION [1] - 1:14 Lofton [1] - 41:6 lonely [1] - 25:12 longstanding [1] - 19:3 look [6] - 6:9, 10:3, 10:8, 10:12, 16:8, 18:10 looked [1] - 24:25 looking [3] - 6:19, 23:12, 58:16 looks [1] - 48:10 loophole [1] - 39:6 lose [1] - 28:23 loss [5] - 15:19, 30:25, 56:18, 56:19 low [1] - 26:1 low-tax [1] - 26:1 LOWER [1] - 1:15 lower [1] - 53:22 lucky [1] - 22:5</p>	<p>medical [5] - 16:13, 17:3, 17:14, 26:23, 27:3, 27:9, 27:10, 28:4 meet [1] - 9:3 MEETING [3] - 1:4, 1:14, 61:5 meeting [2] - 3:4, 3:6, 4:9, 9:4, 14:11, 37:10, 39:15, 59:22, 61:3 meetings [5] - 18:7, 18:8, 22:9, 38:4, 38:18, 42:15 meets [1] - 9:3 member [1] - 5:7 MEMBERS [1] - 1:9 members [5] - 6:23, 8:2, 40:10, 42:9, 58:11 memories [1] - 21:24 men [1] - 22:18 mention [1] - 49:6 mentioned [3] - 25:23, 52:15, 53:3 METZKE [2] - 1:17, 62:5, 62:11 Miami [1] - 24:23 Michael [1] - 14:14 mid [1] - 21:23 million [11] - 49:4, 50:12, 51:1, 52:11, 52:13, 52:17, 52:21, 58:18, 59:8, 59:21, 60:10 mind [1] - 28:20 minute [1] - 44:20 minutes [3] - 6:7, 9:42, 3:58:22 mission [1] - 22:15 mistakes [1] - 29:17 moment [1] - 30:11 money [7] - 23:3, 23:13, 25:15, 28:13, 28:14, 28:15, 28:19 month [1] - 28:24 Moody [1] - 4:13 MOODY [26] - 1:9, 7:6, 7:16, 8:3, 8:25, 9:2, 13:15, 14:3, 18:17, 21:10, 29:4, 34:16, 35:20, 37:15, 38:11, 39:21, 41:18, 42:20, 43:19, 49:23, 54:17, 55:18, 56:2, 56:20, 58:24, 59:14, 60:3, 60:17 morale [1] - 12:5 morning [16] - 3:3, 10:19, 11:18, 13:1, 15:12, 16:11, 21:19, 37:7, 42:9, 42:11, 46:16, 46:18, 50:5, 58:7, 58:9 morning's [1] - 3:7 Mortgage [3] - 59:9, 59:22, 60:11 mortgage [2] - 19:24, 31:10 most [8] - 23:1, 24:11, 25:8, 29:16, 30:15, 31:20, 50:17 mother [1] - 5:25 motion [38] - 13:10, 13:19, 13:25, 14:4, 34:7, 34:9, 35:13, 35:15, 35:25, 37:12, 37:19, 38:7, 38:13, 39:20, 39:25, 41:14, 41:20, 42:17, 42:22, 43:15, 43:22, 46:3, 48:17, 48:23, 49:19, 49:25, 54:13, 54:19, 55:15, 55:20, 58:23, 59:2, 59:12, 59:17, 60:2, 60:6, 60:16, 60:21 move [11] - 8:15, 8:16, 22:10, 26:6, 34:11, 41:16, 43:17, 49:21, 53:16, 54:15, 55:16</p>	<p>moved [10] - 13:13, 37:14, 38:9, 39:21, 42:18, 48:19, 58:24, 59:14, 60:3, 60:17 moves [1] - 47:11 moving [2] - 46:24, 48:9 MR [8] - 21:19, 25:8, 27:6, 29:13, 30:23, 32:7, 33:14, 34:3 MS [23] - 10:19, 11:18, 13:1, 15:12, 16:16, 17:1, 17:20, 18:1, 19:2, 19:20, 20:8, 20:21, 21:1, 21:13, 44:18, 46:16, 50:5, 53:19, 54:21, 55:22, 55:24, 56:1, 57:1 Multifamily [3] - 59:9, 59:22, 60:11 multiple [2] - 49:12, 52:6</p>
M		
<p>Madden [1] - 30:1 Magnitude [2] - 47:17, 49:3 main [1] - 15:23 major [3] - 9:25, 52:25 majority [1] - 38:20 manage [1] - 56:10 managed [2] - 44:10, 56:10 management [2] - 17:24, 49:11 Manager [1] - 46:19 manager [1] - 18:3 Manatee [3] - 53:20, 53:23, 53:25 Manuel [1] - 41:1 March [2] - 61:4, 62:7 marijuana [9] - 16:19, 17:3, 17:6, 17:15, 26:23, 27:4, 27:9, 27:19, 28:5 marine [1] - 51:20 Marine [2] - 54:5, 55:5 mark [1] - 52:9 market [1] - 24:3 marketplace [1] - 34:23 markets [2] - 24:1, 24:6 married [1] - 7:12 match [1] - 39:16 matches [2] - 34:13, 39:7 matters [1] - 5:16 Mayfield [1] - 42:25 MBA [1] - 24:2 McAndrew [1] - 54:21 McGhee [1] - 3:7 mean [6] - 27:6, 31:17, 32:4, 33:16, 33:20, 47:2 meaning [1] - 58:19 means [1] - 24:8</p>	<p>mind [1] - 28:20 minute [1] - 44:20 minutes [3] - 6:7, 9:42, 3:58:22 mission [1] - 22:15 mistakes [1] - 29:17 moment [1] - 30:11 money [7] - 23:3, 23:13, 25:15, 28:13, 28:14, 28:15, 28:19 month [1] - 28:24 Moody [1] - 4:13 MOODY [26] - 1:9, 7:6, 7:16, 8:3, 8:25, 9:2, 13:15, 14:3, 18:17, 21:10, 29:4, 34:16, 35:20, 37:15, 38:11, 39:21, 41:18, 42:20, 43:19, 49:23, 54:17, 55:18, 56:2, 56:20, 58:24, 59:14, 60:3, 60:17 morale [1] - 12:5 morning [16] - 3:3, 10:19, 11:18, 13:1, 15:12, 16:11, 21:19, 37:7, 42:9, 42:11, 46:16, 46:18, 50:5, 58:7, 58:9 morning's [1] - 3:7 Mortgage [3] - 59:9, 59:22, 60:11 mortgage [2] - 19:24, 31:10 most [8] - 23:1, 24:11, 25:8, 29:16, 30:15, 31:20, 50:17 mother [1] - 5:25 motion [38] - 13:10, 13:19, 13:25, 14:4, 34:7, 34:9, 35:13, 35:15, 35:25, 37:12, 37:19, 38:7, 38:13, 39:20, 39:25, 41:14, 41:20, 42:17, 42:22, 43:15, 43:22, 46:3, 48:17, 48:23, 49:19, 49:25, 54:13, 54:19, 55:15, 55:20, 58:23, 59:2, 59:12, 59:17, 60:2, 60:6, 60:16, 60:21 move [11] - 8:15, 8:16, 22:10, 26:6, 34:11, 41:16, 43:17, 49:21, 53:16, 54:15, 55:16</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N</p> <p>name [1] - 41:1 names [1] - 41:13 NANCY [3] - 1:17, 62:5, 62:11 nancy@metzke.com [1] - 1:24 NASD [1] - 30:6 nation [2] - 50:13, 50:24 national [4] - 31:7, 32:10, 50:10, 50:23 National [3] - 11:11, 54:5, 55:5 nationally [1] - 47:21 nations [1] - 22:19 natural [1] - 9:7 Nature [3] - 46:10, 46:19, 48:10 near [1] - 56:17 necessary [1] - 24:13 need [8] - 18:10, 18:16, 25:13, 26:25, 33:16, 33:18, 33:19, 35:14 needle [1] - 47:11 needs [1] - 8:12 net [2] - 51:14, 58:19 never [2] - 5:19, 22:8 New [1] - 26:8 new [12] - 19:12, 19:23, 20:9, 20:14, 25:24, 35:14, 51:23, 52:2, 53:19, 53:21, 54:22, 60:12 newly [2] - 5:17, 13:22 next [10] - 4:4, 6:20, 10:9, 14:11, 15:4, 42:3, 43:25, 46:14, 51:3, 61:3 night's [1] - 58:13 NIKKI [1] - 1:11 Nikki [1] - 32:25 nine [2] - 38:17, 53:24 nitrogen [1] - 53:13 NO [11] - 2:2, 10:16, 13:8, 13:18, 33:25, 35:23, 37:18, 48:16, 49:18, 53:18, 61:1 no-tax [1] - 26:1 Noah [15] - 2:10, 4:7, 4:10, 4:13, 8:6, 10:22, 11:6, 11:8, 11:14, 11:24, 13:11, 13:21, 13:24, 14:9, 42:5 nomination [1] - 7:17 nominations [1] - 40:13 nominees [3] - 39:14, 40:4, 40:20 non [1] - 39:5 non-approvals [1] - 39:5</p>

<p>none ^[5] - 11:4, 13:9, 13:19, 35:24, 37:19</p> <p>Norris ^[1] - 44:8</p> <p>North ^[2] - 12:17, 45:11</p> <p>nose ^[1] - 29:24</p> <p>Notes ^[1] - 59:9</p> <p>notes ^[1] - 62:6</p> <p>nothing ^[1] - 28:22</p> <p>notice ^[1] - 38:16</p> <p>November ^[2] - 42:14, 43:4</p> <p>novo ^[2] - 19:22, 19:23</p> <p>number ^[5] - 5:4, 8:8, 17:21, 19:10, 19:21</p> <p>numbers ^[1] - 58:16</p>	<p>28:7, 29:25, 32:17, 33:6, 46:6, 46:7, 47:10, 49:17, 50:17, 54:25, 60:10</p> <p>Operation ^[1] - 27:12</p> <p>opinion ^[2] - 16:22, 33:10</p> <p>opportunities ^[6] - 16:24, 31:11, 51:9, 51:13, 52:20, 53:8</p> <p>opportunity ^[6] - 12:2, 12:13, 26:4, 46:17, 46:20, 48:11</p> <p>option ^[3] - 32:19, 44:2, 49:1</p> <p>order ^[4] - 4:23, 5:2, 53:23, 54:23</p> <p>Order ^[1] - 40:16</p> <p>organization ^[1] - 11:21</p> <p>originally ^[1] - 26:7</p> <p>Orlando ^[1] - 45:13</p> <p>ornamental ^[1] - 51:20</p> <p>ostensibly ^[1] - 24:18</p> <p>otherwise ^[1] - 6:11</p> <p>overview ^[1] - 50:8</p> <p>overwhelmingly ^[1] - 27:9</p> <p>owned ^[2] - 44:9, 52:12</p> <p>owner ^[1] - 6:1</p> <p>oyster ^[3] - 52:3, 53:24, 54:24</p> <p>oysters ^[5] - 51:19, 52:25, 53:1, 56:19, 56:21</p>	<p>payments ^[1] - 58:19</p> <p>people ^[27] - 8:16, 9:22, 22:4, 22:22, 23:3, 23:11, 23:18, 23:25, 24:14, 24:18, 25:9, 25:12, 25:13, 26:11, 27:7, 27:8, 28:13, 28:18, 28:23, 30:15, 30:18, 33:11, 33:12, 33:18, 47:14, 56:18</p> <p>percent ^[3] - 26:22, 51:1, 58:14</p> <p>performance ^[2] - 12:7, 58:12</p> <p>perhaps ^[1] - 19:12</p> <p>permit ^[3] - 54:10, 55:9, 55:13</p> <p>person ^[1] - 31:12</p> <p>personal ^[1] - 25:20</p> <p>personally ^[1] - 9:3</p> <p>personnel ^[1] - 17:22</p> <p>perspective ^[1] - 16:6</p> <p>Phase ^[1] - 43:13</p> <p>philosophy ^[2] - 17:23, 27:3</p> <p>phonetics ^[1] - 53:21</p> <p>phosphorous ^[1] - 53:14</p> <p>photo ^[1] - 14:5</p> <p>phytoplankton ^[1] - 53:11</p> <p>pick ^[2] - 8:24, 24:9</p> <p>picked ^[1] - 26:19</p> <p>piece ^[3] - 47:10, 47:11, 47:16</p> <p>pieces ^[3] - 46:25, 47:6, 47:24</p> <p>pillars ^[1] - 5:5</p> <p>pitcher ^[1] - 12:18</p> <p>place ^[5] - 8:15, 8:16, 8:20, 8:23, 26:10</p> <p>placed ^[1] - 50:24</p> <p>places ^[7] - 12:11, 44:22, 45:2, 45:3, 45:15, 45:20, 50:13</p> <p>plans ^[2] - 6:13, 10:4</p> <p>plant ^[1] - 12:18</p> <p>plants ^[1] - 50:20</p> <p>plaques ^[1] - 40:11</p> <p>Plaza ^[1] - 40:12</p> <p>pleasure ^[1] - 14:16</p> <p>Pledge ^[1] - 3:9</p> <p>PLEDGE ^[1] - 3:11</p> <p>plot ^[1] - 56:11</p> <p>plus ^[1] - 8:9</p> <p>podium ^[3] - 4:13, 15:9, 21:15</p> <p>point ^[1] - 7:25</p> <p>Point ^[1] - 27:13</p> <p>pointed ^[1] - 40:21</p> <p>points ^[1] - 58:15</p> <p>Police ^[3] - 40:14, 40:15, 40:16</p> <p>political ^[1] - 32:2</p> <p>Political ^[1] - 13:2</p> <p>pool ^[1] - 8:8</p> <p>poor ^[1] - 7:4</p> <p>Portia ^[1] - 50:3</p> <p>position ^[8] - 4:8, 5:13, 5:15, 20:25, 34:21, 35:2, 35:11, 35:15</p> <p>positions ^[2] - 19:9, 19:10</p> <p>possible ^[3] - 28:3, 30:11, 33:22</p> <p>POST ^[1] - 1:22</p> <p>posted ^[1] - 5:13</p> <p>potential ^[2] - 17:24, 52:19</p>
O		
<p>Obama ^[1] - 27:13</p> <p>objection ^[7] - 39:25, 41:20, 48:23, 49:25, 54:19, 55:20, 60:21</p> <p>objections ^[7] - 13:17, 34:18, 35:22, 37:17, 38:13, 42:22, 43:22</p> <p>obsolete ^[1] - 39:9</p> <p>obstacle ^[2] - 32:14, 32:15</p> <p>obvious ^[1] - 23:22</p> <p>obviously ^[5] - 4:21, 16:19, 23:8, 33:3, 34:21</p> <p>Ocala ^[2] - 44:3, 47:3</p> <p>occasions ^[1] - 20:23</p> <p>occur ^[1] - 45:19</p> <p>occurring ^[1] - 48:1</p> <p>OF ^[14] - 1:1, 1:4, 1:11, 3:11, 4:1, 4:2, 15:1, 15:2, 37:1, 42:1, 58:1, 62:3, 62:3</p> <p>offender ^[1] - 30:12</p> <p>offered ^[2] - 24:9, 38:18</p> <p>offering ^[1] - 23:11</p> <p>office ^[11] - 5:17, 6:6, 9:15, 18:25, 22:16, 23:1, 24:23, 30:8, 30:14, 33:17, 35:6</p> <p>Office ^[18] - 2:6, 5:11, 6:7, 15:5, 15:17, 15:20, 17:23, 18:19, 18:23, 19:4, 20:10, 24:20, 25:1, 30:10, 32:13, 34:12, 54:4, 55:4</p> <p>OFFICE ^[2] - 1:22, 15:1</p> <p>Officer ^[3] - 5:12, 41:3, 41:4</p> <p>OFFICER ^[1] - 1:10</p> <p>Officers ^[1] - 40:4</p> <p>officers ^[1] - 40:7</p> <p>offices ^[1] - 19:5</p> <p>OFR ^[4] - 16:14, 18:11, 19:2, 33:10</p> <p>OFR's ^[1] - 34:22</p> <p>often ^[1] - 25:3</p> <p>Okaloosa ^[1] - 59:11</p> <p>Okeechobee ^[2] - 6:11, 10:2</p> <p>old ^[1] - 22:8</p> <p>older ^[1] - 25:11</p> <p>oldest ^[1] - 11:20</p> <p>one ^[22] - 14:8, 15:22, 16:13, 16:17, 17:12, 17:13, 17:18, 20:17, 21:5, 27:11,</p>	P	<p>PAGE ^[1] - 2:2</p> <p>Palms ^[1] - 60:14</p> <p>Panhandle ^[1] - 12:19</p> <p>parcel ^[1] - 45:17</p> <p>parcels ^[1] - 44:7</p> <p>parents ^[2] - 21:22, 25:18</p> <p>Park ^[1] - 43:11</p> <p>parking ^[1] - 18:12</p> <p>parking-ticket-type ^[1] - 18:12</p> <p>Parks ^[1] - 11:11</p> <p>part ^[8] - 6:21, 22:11, 23:21, 23:22, 23:23, 23:24, 47:4, 47:7</p> <p>particular ^[1] - 45:7</p> <p>parties ^[1] - 17:4</p> <p>partner ^[2] - 12:13, 46:20</p> <p>partnering ^[1] - 44:11</p> <p>partnership ^[1] - 46:24</p> <p>pass ^[1] - 31:1</p> <p>passion ^[1] - 9:6</p> <p>past ^[2] - 33:7, 47:8</p> <p>patience ^[1] - 47:5</p> <p>Patronis ^[1] - 4:19</p> <p>PATRONIS ^[28] - 1:10, 7:1, 7:9, 7:18, 8:5, 13:23, 14:10, 14:17, 17:17, 17:21, 25:7, 26:15, 26:17, 34:9, 34:11, 35:18, 41:16, 43:17, 48:21, 49:21, 54:15, 55:16, 56:5, 56:22, 59:1, 59:16, 60:5, 60:19</p> <p>Paul ^[1] - 41:5</p> <p>pay ^[1] - 31:9</p> <p>paying ^[1] - 45:22</p> <p>payment ^[1] - 39:7</p>

<p>pounds [1] - 53:1 power [1] - 29:11 powers [1] - 30:14 practices [2] - 34:25, 39:17 prepare [1] - 29:9 prepared [1] - 29:9 present [5] - 37:4, 42:5, 50:9, 53:5, 58:6 presented [3] - 42:11, 43:9, 50:3 Preserve [1] - 44:9 preserve [1] - 45:12 President's [1] - 31:17 pretty [1] - 7:23 prevent [1] - 39:7 prevention [1] - 23:14 previous [3] - 9:5, 20:23, 38:4 previously [2] - 25:1, 46:22 prey [1] - 25:12 price [1] - 44:13 prices [1] - 24:9 priority [4] - 9:20, 12:11, 25:17, 25:21 problems [1] - 27:24 procedures [2] - 39:12, 39:16 proceedings [1] - 62:6 process [2] - 6:9, 6:18 produced [1] - 43:6 producer [1] - 52:25 producing [1] - 51:18 product [1] - 6:3 production [4] - 50:14, 50:18, 50:25, 51:16</p>	<p>providers [1] - 35:3 provides [2] - 15:20, 53:10 providing [1] - 5:23 public [15] - 4:12, 5:7, 5:23, 6:18, 10:17, 12:25, 13:7, 15:19, 16:7, 38:17, 45:1, 46:6, 48:15, 49:16 publicly [1] - 7:25 published [1] - 27:11 purchase [1] - 44:13 purchases [1] - 39:6 put [7] - 23:4, 30:15, 30:18, 31:3, 40:7, 47:5, 58:16 putting [1] - 31:2 puzzle [2] - 47:6, 47:10</p>	<p>recommend [1] - 49:15 recommendations [1] - 43:6 recommends [3] - 43:14, 54:11, 55:14 record [1] - 62:6 recovery [1] - 14:13 recreate [1] - 45:2 recurring [1] - 6:10 red [1] - 10:1 regarding [2] - 10:18, 14:14 regulating [2] - 20:11, 28:9 Regulation [6] - 2:6, 15:6, 15:18, 30:10, 32:13, 34:13 REGULATION [1] - 15:1 regulation [6] - 15:15, 15:22, 24:12, 24:13, 29:21, 35:17 regulations [4] - 19:16, 31:10, 31:12, 51:10</p>
Q		
<p>products [3] - 24:10, 24:11, 24:17 profound [1] - 23:20 program [5] - 18:11, 47:19, 48:8, 50:9, 51:8 Program [1] - 46:19 programmatic [3] - 54:9, 55:9, 55:13 progress [1] - 12:5 progressively [1] - 15:15 Project [3] - 43:1, 47:17, 49:3 project [3] - 44:4, 47:18, 49:5 projects [3] - 45:7, 49:7, 49:9 promote [1] - 31:21 proper [1] - 28:3 properties [1] - 49:12 property [3] - 44:6, 46:25, 47:16 proposed [2] - 38:16, 38:17 proposing [1] - 55:11 prosecuted [2] - 19:1, 30:1 protect [5] - 34:24, 45:4, 45:9, 45:21, 47:24 protecting [2] - 44:22, 45:15 PROTECTION [1] - 4:1 Protection [10] - 2:4, 4:5, 5:3, 6:8, 10:23, 11:9, 13:12, 29:7, 35:10, 55:3 protection [3] - 15:22, 40:8, 52:9 Protection's [1] - 54:3 protections [1] - 15:21 provide [3] - 51:13, 52:19, 53:7</p>	<p>qualified [2] - 31:10, 35:10 qualify [1] - 31:14 quality [3] - 4:25, 6:13, 9:18 quarter [2] - 37:23, 37:24 questioning [1] - 7:21 questions [14] - 6:24, 9:9, 10:14, 17:18, 20:16, 21:9, 22:12, 22:13, 26:13, 26:14, 32:22, 33:19, 33:22, 53:16 quick [1] - 29:14 quickly [1] - 22:10 quite [1] - 31:19 quote [3] - 22:17, 23:20</p>	<p>regulators [1] - 23:2 Regulatory [1] - 35:9 regulatory [2] - 16:3, 29:5 rehab [1] - 59:10 related [2] - 17:4, 17:15 relationship [1] - 19:3 relationships [1] - 16:2 relatively [2] - 47:1, 51:23 releases [2] - 6:11, 10:2 relies [1] - 10:10 reluctant [1] - 29:2 remain [1] - 3:8 remarkable [1] - 12:4 removes [1] - 39:13 rename [1] - 6:7 report [2] - 5:16, 62:5 REPORTED [1] - 1:17 Reporter [1] - 62:11 REPORTER [1] - 1:17 REPORTERS [1] - 1:22 reporting [1] - 50:12 reports [3] - 18:13, 38:1, 43:3 request [3] - 13:22, 58:21, 60:1 Request [1] - 60:15 requested [2] - 53:21, 54:22 requirement [1] - 39:13 requirements [1] - 39:11 research [1] - 34:6 Reserve [1] - 26:21 residents [1] - 45:13 resilience [1] - 5:6 Resilience [1] - 6:8 resolution [1] - 59:6 resource [1] - 56:9 resources [2] - 9:7, 45:16 respectfully [3] - 38:5, 39:19, 41:12 respectively [1] - 37:10 RESPONSE [10] - 10:16, 13:8, 13:18, 33:25, 35:23, 37:18, 48:16, 49:18, 53:18, 61:1 responsibility [1] - 34:22 responsible [1] - 15:15</p>
R		
	<p>raising [1] - 54:1 ranked [1] - 47:18 Ranking [1] - 43:1 ranking [2] - 43:7, 43:9 rapidly [2] - 47:4, 53:4 rather [1] - 45:21 RE [1] - 1:4 reaction [1] - 28:12 read [2] - 25:4, 28:6 reading [2] - 24:4, 24:5 ready [1] - 9:9 Reagan [1] - 22:17 Reagan's [1] - 23:20 real [1] - 31:5 realizes [1] - 17:24 really [2] - 4:24, 12:9, 16:1, 21:5, 22:1, 22:4, 23:1, 25:2, 25:14, 29:19, 30:4, 30:6, 32:19, 40:17, 46:23, 47:4, 47:12, 47:20, 49:13, 52:24, 53:9 reason [1] - 47:18 recap [1] - 4:15 received [1] - 6:10 recent [2] - 25:25, 30:21 recently [3] - 25:4, 26:24, 41:2 reception [1] - 41:10 recharge [1] - 45:3 recognize [1] - 3:0, 40:6, 41:1, 48:7 recognized [1] - 41:2</p>	

<p>restore [1] - 45:22 restructured [1] - 6:7 restructuring [1] - 5:2 result [1] - 38:20 Retirement [1] - 58:13 retraining [1] - 51:8 revamped [2] - 19:25, 20:1 revamping [1] - 6:6 Revenue [2] - 59:9, 60:12 revenues [1] - 28:2 reviewed [6] - 43:2, 43:5, 54:4, 54:7, 55:4, 55:6 revises [3] - 38:22, 39:11, 39:16 revisions [1] - 38:16 Richards [1] - 44:5 ripped [1] - 23:19 risk [3] - 18:11, 29:20, 31:15 risk-focused [1] - 18:11 risks [2] - 23:9, 23:10 River [3] - 12:18, 45:11, 49:4 rivers [1] - 45:4 robust [1] - 56:15 rock [2] - 50:21, 51:19 role [1] - 29:9 rollout [1] - 4:23 RON [1] - 1:9 Ron [3] - 21:19, 26:18, 34:11 Ronald [2] - 15:7, 22:17 ROOM [1] - 1:14 roots [1] - 12:15 Rosa [2] - 54:23, 54:25 Rosager [1] - 53:21 RPR [3] - 1:17, 62:5, 62:11 Rubin [7] - 15:7, 21:14, 21:20, 34:2, 34:12, 35:6, 36:1 RUBIN [8] - 21:19, 25:8, 27:6, 29:13, 30:23, 32:7, 33:14, 34:3 rules [2] - 38:16, 38:17 run [4] - 15:24, 28:21, 29:1, 29:20 rural [1] - 45:5 Ryan [1] - 54:21</p>	<p>scale [1] - 47:1 scams [1] - 31:25 scheduled [2] - 41:11, 61:3 Science [1] - 5:12 science [2] - 5:6, 5:16 science-based [1] - 5:6 scientifically [1] - 6:14 seafood [2] - 56:8, 56:19 SEC [4] - 28:8, 29:6, 30:1, 30:6 SEC's [1] - 24:23 Second [5] - 35:20, 41:18, 43:20; 59:15, 59:16 second [38] - 13:4, 13:14, 13:15, 14:2, 14:3, 24:19, 25:22, 30:18, 34:15, 34:16, 35:19, 37:15, 37:22, 37:24, 38:10, 38:11, 39:22, 39:23, 41:17, 42:19, 42:20, 43:18, 43:19, 47:16, 48:20, 48:21, 49:22, 49:23, 54:16, 54:17, 55:17, 55:18, 58:25, 59:1, 60:4, 60:5, 60:18, 60:19 Secretaries [1] - 11:22 Secretary [11] - 2:4, 2:10, 4:6, 4:8, 7:2, 10:22, 11:8, 11:14, 13:11, 13:22, 44:18 SECRETARY [16] - 4:2, 4:18, 7:11, 7:14, 9:11, 10:12, 14:6, 14:15, 42:7, 42:24, 43:24, 46:5, 46:9, 46:13, 48:25, 50:2 secretary [1] - 8:10 Section [1] - 40:5 securities [1] - 19:24 Securities [1] - 35:7 see [6] - 5:19, 12:10, 16:22, 18:23, 51:3, 53:4 seeing [3] - 6:15, 13:9, 29:16 selection [1] - 40:19 Seminole [3] - 7:12, 7:20, 44:8 sending [1] - 26:21 senior [2] - 25:3, 25:5 sensitive [2] - 8:12, 8:21 sent [1] - 26:24 sequester [1] - 45:6 serious [1] - 10:3 seriously [2] - 10:7, 35:4 servant [1] - 15:19 serve [4] - 15:11, 16:6, 21:17, 33:17 served [2] - 8:10, 8:14 Service [4] - 16:7, 21:4, 54:6, 55:6 service [7] - 7:3, 8:6, 8:10, 9:5, 15:19, 29:6, 35:3 services [6] - 22:20, 23:17, 27:16, 27:24, 28:4 Services [3] - 12:14, 42:12, 50:4 set [2] - 35:14, 35:15 sets [1] - 38:17 Sewell [1] - 41:9 share [2] - 9:16, 26:19 Shellfish [1] - 53:10 shellfish [10] - 50:21, 50:25, 51:2, 51:5, 51:12, 51:18, 52:13, 52:15, 53:7,</p>	<p>53:8 sheriff [1] - 40:23 Sheriffs [1] - 40:14 shift [2] - 19:9, 19:10 short [1] - 23:23 show [3] - 49:10, 49:12, 49:13 showing [1] - 7:20 shown [1] - 7:4 shows [1] - 8:20 shrimp [1] - 50:20 side [2] - 19:11, 27:23 Sierra [1] - 13:3 sign [1] - 32:13 significant [1] - 45:25 Silicon [2] - 26:7, 26:8 simple [2] - 23:19, 33:14 simply [1] - 44:23 sincerity [1] - 8:5 site [2] - 43:3, 55:10 sitting [2] - 22:14 situation [2] - 16:20, 17:5 six [4] - 21:21, 42:10, 51:25, 55:23 sixth [1] - 50:13 skills [1] - 18:4 skip [1] - 22:11 slaves [1] - 40:25 small [2] - 32:14, 33:8 smaller [3] - 31:1, 31:3, 47:1 smart [1] - 22:6 Society [1] - 44:15 softball [3] - 7:2, 7:6, 7:7 solution [4] - 17:2, 17:3, 17:11, 17:12 solutions [2] - 17:10, 19:7 someone [1] - 30:12 somewhere [1] - 58:5 son [1] - 40:25 sophisticated [1] - 12:16 sound [2] - 15:24, 17:12 South [1] - 21:22 special [3] - 38:23, 38:25, 39:2 specifically [1] - 18:20 spend [3] - 18:11, 18:13, 26:3 spent [4] - 15:14, 24:3, 29:6, 29:7 spike [1] - 20:5 spring [1] - 45:9 springs [3] - 12:17, 47:20, 48:1 Springs [2] - 47:17, 49:3 St [1] - 12:18 staff [8] - 18:6, 18:9, 21:3, 43:2, 43:6, 46:21, 54:11, 55:14 stakeholder [1] - 10:25 Stan [1] - 42:25 stand [1] - 6:20 standard [2] - 28:17, 31:12 standards [1] - 22:21 standing [2] - 3:8, 9:9 stands [1] - 45:9 start [7] - 4:14, 15:9, 21:16, 21:25, 53:23, 54:23, 56:14</p>
S		
<p>safe [3] - 15:24, 17:12, 34:23 safety [1] - 40:8 SAID [1] - 3:11 salary [4] - 14:1, 34:13, 35:14, 35:15 sales [1] - 50:11 Santa [2] - 54:23, 54:25 Sapp [1] - 50:3 SAPP [7] - 50:5, 53:19, 54:21, 55:22, 55:24, 56:1, 57:1 sapphire [1] - 45:10 Saturday [1] - 41:12 savvy [1] - 12:13 saw [2] - 12:1, 56:22 SB-7026 [1] - 39:8 SBA [1] - 59:6</p>	<p>scale [1] - 47:1 scams [1] - 31:25 scheduled [2] - 41:11, 61:3 Science [1] - 5:12 science [2] - 5:6, 5:16 science-based [1] - 5:6 scientifically [1] - 6:14 seafood [2] - 56:8, 56:19 SEC [4] - 28:8, 29:6, 30:1, 30:6 SEC's [1] - 24:23 Second [5] - 35:20, 41:18, 43:20; 59:15, 59:16 second [38] - 13:4, 13:14, 13:15, 14:2, 14:3, 24:19, 25:22, 30:18, 34:15, 34:16, 35:19, 37:15, 37:22, 37:24, 38:10, 38:11, 39:22, 39:23, 41:17, 42:19, 42:20, 43:18, 43:19, 47:16, 48:20, 48:21, 49:22, 49:23, 54:16, 54:17, 55:17, 55:18, 58:25, 59:1, 60:4, 60:5, 60:18, 60:19 Secretaries [1] - 11:22 Secretary [11] - 2:4, 2:10, 4:6, 4:8, 7:2, 10:22, 11:8, 11:14, 13:11, 13:22, 44:18 SECRETARY [16] - 4:2, 4:18, 7:11, 7:14, 9:11, 10:12, 14:6, 14:15, 42:7, 42:24, 43:24, 46:5, 46:9, 46:13, 48:25, 50:2 secretary [1] - 8:10 Section [1] - 40:5 securities [1] - 19:24 Securities [1] - 35:7 see [6] - 5:19, 12:10, 16:22, 18:23, 51:3, 53:4 seeing [3] - 6:15, 13:9, 29:16 selection [1] - 40:19 Seminole [3] - 7:12, 7:20, 44:8 sending [1] - 26:21 senior [2] - 25:3, 25:5 sensitive [2] - 8:12, 8:21 sent [1] - 26:24 sequester [1] - 45:6 serious [1] - 10:3 seriously [2] - 10:7, 35:4 servant [1] - 15:19 serve [4] - 15:11, 16:6, 21:17, 33:17 served [2] - 8:10, 8:14 Service [4] - 16:7, 21:4, 54:6, 55:6 service [7] - 7:3, 8:6, 8:10, 9:5, 15:19, 29:6, 35:3 services [6] - 22:20, 23:17, 27:16, 27:24, 28:4 Services [3] - 12:14, 42:12, 50:4 set [2] - 35:14, 35:15 sets [1] - 38:17 Sewell [1] - 41:9 share [2] - 9:16, 26:19 Shellfish [1] - 53:10 shellfish [10] - 50:21, 50:25, 51:2, 51:5, 51:12, 51:18, 52:13, 52:15, 53:7,</p>	<p>53:8 sheriff [1] - 40:23 Sheriffs [1] - 40:14 shift [2] - 19:9, 19:10 short [1] - 23:23 show [3] - 49:10, 49:12, 49:13 showing [1] - 7:20 shown [1] - 7:4 shows [1] - 8:20 shrimp [1] - 50:20 side [2] - 19:11, 27:23 Sierra [1] - 13:3 sign [1] - 32:13 significant [1] - 45:25 Silicon [2] - 26:7, 26:8 simple [2] - 23:19, 33:14 simply [1] - 44:23 sincerity [1] - 8:5 site [2] - 43:3, 55:10 sitting [2] - 22:14 situation [2] - 16:20, 17:5 six [4] - 21:21, 42:10, 51:25, 55:23 sixth [1] - 50:13 skills [1] - 18:4 skip [1] - 22:11 slaves [1] - 40:25 small [2] - 32:14, 33:8 smaller [3] - 31:1, 31:3, 47:1 smart [1] - 22:6 Society [1] - 44:15 softball [3] - 7:2, 7:6, 7:7 solution [4] - 17:2, 17:3, 17:11, 17:12 solutions [2] - 17:10, 19:7 someone [1] - 30:12 somewhere [1] - 58:5 son [1] - 40:25 sophisticated [1] - 12:16 sound [2] - 15:24, 17:12 South [1] - 21:22 special [3] - 38:23, 38:25, 39:2 specifically [1] - 18:20 spend [3] - 18:11, 18:13, 26:3 spent [4] - 15:14, 24:3, 29:6, 29:7 spike [1] - 20:5 spring [1] - 45:9 springs [3] - 12:17, 47:20, 48:1 Springs [2] - 47:17, 49:3 St [1] - 12:18 staff [8] - 18:6, 18:9, 21:3, 43:2, 43:6, 46:21, 54:11, 55:14 stakeholder [1] - 10:25 Stan [1] - 42:25 stand [1] - 6:20 standard [2] - 28:17, 31:12 standards [1] - 22:21 standing [2] - 3:8, 9:9 stands [1] - 45:9 start [7] - 4:14, 15:9, 21:16, 21:25, 53:23, 54:23, 56:14</p>

started [3] - 5:1, 26:20, 51:22
starting [2] - 6:9, 6:17
State [9] - 2:12, 12:20, 17:9, 25:1, 26:23, 40:16, 44:8, 51:7, 58:4
STATE [3] - 1:1, 58:1, 62:3
state [36] - 8:7, 8:13, 9:23, 9:24, 10:3, 10:11, 11:2, 16:3, 16:15, 16:20, 16:23, 16:24, 19:21, 20:14, 21:23, 22:7, 28:2, 28:5, 32:9, 32:21, 33:5, 41:7, 44:23, 46:21, 46:22, 47:4, 47:7, 47:20, 48:9, 49:11, 49:13, 50:16, 50:18, 52:5, 52:12
state's [1] - 11:20
state-owned [1] - 52:12
statement [4] - 22:24, 23:23, 23:24
States [1] - 28:18
states [4] - 19:17, 26:1, 26:3
status [1] - 14:12
statute [1] - 6:13
statutes [2] - 19:25, 20:1
Statutes [1] - 40:6
statutory [1] - 38:21
steal [1] - 23:12
stemming [1] - 30:21
stenographic [1] - 62:6
stenographically [1] - 62:5
Steve [1] - 30:1
Stevens [2] - 46:9, 46:18
STEVENS [1] - 46:16
stigma [1] - 17:6
still [2] - 8:19, 28:20
stints [2] - 15:17, 35:7
stop [2] - 30:16, 30:17
stopping [2] - 23:2
stories [1] - 25:9
straight [2] - 11:3, 25:2
straight-up [1] - 25:2
strategic [2] - 45:25, 48:8
strategically [1] - 47:24
Street [2] - 27:12, 30:3
strides [2] - 8:22, 10:11
strong [3] - 16:2, 18:4, 21:6
stronger [1] - 31:23
structural [1] - 5:10
studies [1] - 24:5
sturgeon [1] - 55:10
style [1] - 17:25
subject [1] - 44:6
submerged [5] - 51:15, 51:17, 51:24, 52:12, 53:20
submit [4] - 37:10, 38:6, 39:19, 41:13
submitted [3] - 11:10, 40:18, 43:3
subsidizing [1] - 26:3
substantive [1] - 18:14
successfully [1] - 19:1
sum [1] - 29:14
summarize [2] - 29:14, 38:1
Suncrest [1] - 59:25
support [9] - 11:11, 11:13, 12:22, 20:13, 28:22, 45:5, 48:6, 48:7, 56:23

supporter [1] - 31:21
supporting [2] - 7:17
supportive [1] - 56:17
supports [2] - 10:21, 45:24
surface [1] - 52:2
surprised [1] - 24:24
surprisingly [1] - 24:21
sustainability [1] - 6:2
sustainable [2] - 6:21, 56:9
Suwannee [1] - 8:11
Swearingen [2] - 2:8, 37:4
SWEARINGEN [5] - 37:6, 37:21, 38:15, 40:2, 41:22
System [1] - 58:14
system [1] - 52:3

T

tackle [1] - 11:1
tackling [2] - 4:16, 18:5
tactics [1] - 39:3
talented [2] - 12:8, 22:6
talks [1] - 30:24
TALLAHASSEE [2] - 1:15, 1:23
Tampa [2] - 53:22, 56:21
tangible [1] - 45:8
target [1] - 58:15
targeted [1] - 51:7
Task [2] - 5:18, 6:18
tax [5] - 25:25, 26:1, 26:3, 31:19
tech [1] - 26:11
technical [2] - 38:20, 38:24
temperament [1] - 11:1
ten [1] - 40:18
tenacity [1] - 47:5
tenure [1] - 7:3
terms [2] - 4:16, 30:22
THE [8] - 1:4, 1:15, 3:10, 4:2, 15:2, 42:1, 61:5
theory [1] - 33:13
thousand [3] - 32:17, 38:3, 50:15
threat [1] - 10:4
three [1] - 5:5
thrive [1] - 45:3
throughout [1] - 52:5
thrown [1] - 8:7
thumb [2] - 29:23
ticket [1] - 18:12
tide [1] - 10:1
timeline [1] - 6:16
today [20] - 4:11, 6:22, 7:22, 9:10, 12:22, 15:7, 16:12, 34:5, 35:6, 37:8, 43:10, 44:14, 44:21, 44:24, 46:1, 46:25, 48:6, 50:22, 53:4, 60:25
today's [3] - 4:9, 9:4, 61:3
together [9] - 9:18, 10:10, 10:13, 19:6, 20:3, 47:6, 52:6, 52:8, 52:10
togethers [1] - 18:8
took [1] - 12:1

top [3] - 24:20, 25:21, 47:18
top-ranked [1] - 47:18
total [1] - 58:20
totalled [1] - 50:11
tough [1] - 29:19
tougher [1] - 25:11
towards [2] - 38:5, 47:12
Town [1] - 60:14
toxic [1] - 10:1
Track [1] - 44:9
trade [2] - 20:4, 51:21
training [3] - 38:24, 39:1, 39:3
transcript [1] - 62:6
transformed [1] - 10:23
Transparency [1] - 5:12
transparency [2] - 10:24, 12:3
transparent [1] - 5:24
tried [1] - 24:6
trooper [1] - 41:7
tropical [1] - 50:19
trouble [1] - 32:16
true [2] - 25:7, 62:6
truly [2] - 17:2, 21:6
TRUST [1] - 42:1
Trust [4] - 2:10, 11:12, 43:2, 58:14
trustees [2] - 50:5, 58:10
Trustees [3] - 2:9, 42:15, 43:10
TRUSTEES [1] - 42:1
truthful [1] - 23:8
try [1] - 31:22
trying [4] - 24:8, 24:9, 24:18, 29:22
Tuesday [1] - 61:4
turtles [1] - 50:20
twice [1] - 20:20
two [22] - 4:6, 8:1, 15:6, 15:16, 16:21, 19:21, 20:22, 22:12, 22:13, 22:24, 22:25, 24:4, 24:21, 33:22, 42:11, 43:7, 43:25, 45:7, 46:25, 48:6, 53:22
two-acre [1] - 53:22
type [1] - 18:12
typical [1] - 51:24

U

under [2] - 31:12, 52:17
unique [2] - 35:2, 47:20
uniquely [1] - 35:10
United [1] - 28:18
University [2] - 7:24, 24:2
unless [1] - 53:16
unnecessary [2] - 23:6, 24:15
up [12] - 19:13, 24:7, 24:16, 25:2, 26:19, 29:20, 33:2, 44:21, 45:24, 51:1, 58:14, 59:7
update [2] - 14:12, 58:12
updates [2] - 38:25, 39:3
upstairs [1] - 40:12
UPTON [1] - 10:19
Upton [2] - 3:9, 10:19

urbanizing [1] - 47:4
urge [1] - 12:22
user [2] - 17:13, 20:2
uses [1] - 47:25

V

Valenstein [8] - 2:10, 4:7, 7:2, 10:22, 11:6, 11:8, 11:14, 13:11
VALENSTEIN [15] - 4:18, 7:11, 7:14, 9:11, 10:12, 14:6, 14:15, 42:7, 42:24, 43:24, 46:5, 46:9, 46:13, 48:25, 50:2
Valley [1] - 26:7
value [3] - 49:8, 49:13, 58:18
values [1] - 51:2
versed [1] - 16:4
vibrant [1] - 51:12
victims [2] - 18:22, 25:3
victories [1] - 22:3
view [1] - 20:6
violating [1] - 18:24
violent [1] - 39:17
vision [1] - 6:21
visitors [1] - 40:9
visits [1] - 43:3
voice [1] - 21:7
Vote [1] - 2:4
vote [2] - 7:13, 48:5
voted [1] - 27:9
votes [1] - 44:24
voting [1] - 4:12
vulnerable [1] - 44:22

W

wages [1] - 22:21
wait [1] - 12:10
Wakiva [3] - 44:3, 45:12, 47:3
Wall [2] - 27:12, 30:3
wants [1] - 31:13
WAS [2] - 3:10, 61:5
Washington [2] - 21:20, 30:24
watchdog [1] - 35:2
watched [1] - 22:9
watching [1] - 10:8
water [13] - 4:25, 6:13, 9:18, 9:19, 12:12, 45:10, 47:23, 51:21, 52:1, 53:12, 53:22, 54:22
Water [2] - 11:13, 44:10
waterfront [1] - 56:13
Waterfront [1] - 43:12
Waterfronts [1] - 42:25
waters [1] - 47:22
watershed [1] - 45:19
watersheds [1] - 45:21
ways [3] - 9:17, 12:16, 18:23
week [1] - 9:16
weeks [1] - 4:6
welcome [3] - 3:3, 32:5, 42:5

WHEREUPON [2] - 3:10, 61:5
White [1] - 26:25
whole [2] - 6:9, 56:12
wholeheartedly [1] - 45:24
wild [2] - 52:23
Wild [2] - 32:8, 32:12
wildlife [1] - 45:3
Wildlife [2] - 54:2, 55:2
Williams [2] - 2:12, 58:5
WILLIAMS [6] - 58:7, 58:10, 59:5, 59:18, 60:8, 60:23
willing [3] - 18:25, 25:13, 31:15
Withlacoochee [1] - 45:11
witness [1] - 30:2
Wolf [1] - 30:3
wonderful [1] - 22:11
words [2] - 24:17, 25:2
workforce [1] - 60:13
world [1] - 33:3
worse [1] - 24:7
worth [1] - 28:19
WRAITHMELL [2] - 11:18, 44:13
Wraithnell [3] - 11:19, 44:14, 44:19

Y

y'all [2] - 53:7, 53:15
year [9] - 8:9, 26:23, 37:23, 37:24, 38:5, 40:13, 51:4, 53:14, 58:17
Year [2] - 41:3, 41:4
year's [1] - 40:18
years [8] - 15:14, 21:21, 22:13, 24:4, 25:6, 35:7, 47:9, 53:8
yesterday [1] - 35:7
York [1] - 25:8
young [1] - 22:3
yourself [2] - 15:10, 21:16

Z

zone [1] - 52:7
zones [1] - 52:4