

**Jury Awards Landowner over \$4 Million after Finding Former County Commissioner Interfered with Project**

A jury recently awarded a landowner approximately \$4.4 million in a case involving a former Martin County commissioner. The jury found that Maggie Hurchalla interfered with an interlocal agreement between Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District (“District”).

The interlocal agreement concerns a project located on property owned by Lake Point Phase I, LLC and Lake Point Phase II, LLC (“Plaintiffs”). Under the agreement, the Plaintiffs received agency approval to mine limerock from the property and then develop the quarry into lakes that would treat stormwater. Additionally, the project was not required to obtain several permits because it was considered an exempt public stormwater management project.

Plaintiffs alleged that: (1) Hurchalla took part in private meetings and email exchanges with Martin County commissioners and attempted to delay the project by making false statements during these meetings; and (2) as a result of Hurchalla’s actions, Martin County and the District breached parts of agreements relating to the project in violation of Martin County regulations.

The Plaintiffs filed suit against Martin County, the District, and Hurchalla, alleging breach of contract and tortious interference and seeking \$22 million in damages. Martin County and the District reportedly reached settlement agreements with the Plaintiffs in 2017 totaling \$18 million. Hurchalla proceeded to trial where a jury entered a verdict of \$4,391,708 against her.