

## Statement for House Water committee June 10, 2021

Polk County Commissioner Craig Pope

Chair Helm, members of the committee,

My apologies for not being with you today. This work is very important to me and I wanted to be able to express my passion for water policy and planning to you even though I can't be with you in person.

I strongly support, and helped craft the AOC Principles and Best Practices of Convening with this very subject of water policy and planning in mind. I am an advocate of asking County Commissioners to take on the role of convening stakeholders in complex community collaboration. I believe no one in a community is better prepared nor more accountable to a broad cross-section of community members than County Commissioners.

I would like to emphasize a statement in the AOC "Goals of Local Water Forums 2021-22". **"Priority setting is not part of this initial phase"**

It would be my intention, and I believe I speak for others that want to start planning conversations locally, that we find a rhythm for local community forums that can build trust, engage local voices and be led by people that are familiar with the communities they are engaged in.

I do realize there are goals of many policy makers or advocacy groups to approach water policy planning by basin or by region but I would argue that not everyone is ready for that approach. Please consider in future work that County Commissioners will use all the available resources that make sense for the level of conversations needed for their communities. Let's don't burden them with a level of regional work that discourage start-ups.