



LEON COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

September 17, 2021

Florida Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.
Board of Directors
P.O. Box 12007
Tallahassee, Florida 32317

Dear Members of the Board:

As Members of the Leon County Legislative Delegation who represent Florida A&M University (FAMU) and care deeply for the success of its programs, we write to express our support for the University's \$8,430,136 proposal entitled *Economic Development through Artificial Intelligence and Data Science-based Education and Training in Advanced Aquaculture*.

The proposal endeavors to promote job growth and economic development through sustainable finfish aquaculture in Bay, Wakulla, Franklin, and Okaloosa counties and beyond through FAMU patent pending technologies. By combining FAMU's leading edge innovations relating to aquaculture with appropriate K-21 education and certifications, the University will be able to take a leadership role in the research, education, and training of the nation's aquaculture sector while ensuring the protection of our Gulf waters.

Aquaculture is critical to resolving the world's food insecurity and projected future food shortages. Food production needs to double by 2050 to feed the projected world population. The world's oceans represent the greatest potential source of protein by generating 30 times more yield per acre of water versus an acre of land. Aquaculture will serve as an ever-growing portion of the seafood industry and will enable us to have available, accessible, and affordable seafood while bringing much-needed economic development. Large-scale seafood imports also provide a basis for the use of biological weapons against the United States, emphasizing the need for domestic sustainability and achievement of self-sufficiency in finfish production. As referenced in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's *Fisheries of the United States 2019 Report*, 70 to 85 percent of seafood is imported into this country, with nearly 50 percent of this imported seafood made available through aquaculture. As of 2019, the United States seafood trade deficit approached \$17 billion.

FAMU has a long and rich history of educating students at the undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and professional levels and enabling them to have a profound impact on society after graduation. It is the nation's largest comprehensive public land grant research institution with approximately \$60 million in annual research awards. Further, FAMU offers a wide array of skills and capabilities to assist in meeting their research, technology, and workforce needs. FAMU is the only HBCU with a comprehensive engineering college that is jointly operated with Florida State University. FAMU is comprised of the following Colleges and Schools: Agriculture and Food Sciences, Arts, Humanities and Social Science, Allied Health, Business and Industry, Environment, Engineering, Education, Journalism, Law, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Science & Technology. Its comprehensive faculty base, extensive operational support for research, and growing graduate student population guarantee tangible outcomes to proposals envisioned in their submission.

We appreciate your careful consideration of their proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we may answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Senator Lorraine Ausley, Senate
District 3

House Democratic Whip & Leader-
Designate Representative Ramon
Alexander, House District 8

Representative Allison Tant,
House District 9