



Tampa Bay Rays
One Tropicana Drive,
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www.raysbaseball.com
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Dear Pinellas County Commissioners,

Thank you for the invitation to attend the Nov. 19 BOCC meeting. We will attend the meeting and listen carefully. However, we want to let you know in advance that we will not be answering questions. We do wish to clear up some apparent misunderstandings.

1. BayCare Ballpark in Pinellas County and other ballparks in the Tampa Bay region were considered as potential homes for the 2025 Rays regular season. We determined that we could not get BayCare Ballpark into a condition where it could host regular season Major League Baseball games by Opening Day in March. Although weather will be a challenge, we are very fortunate to be able to play the 2025 season at George M. Steinbrenner Field and not be forced to leave the Tampa Bay region.

2. We have been in regular communication with county commissioners and the county administrator over the last weeks and months. We also have answered or returned every phone call and message. At no point were we given any indication that the BOCC might choose to delay the supplemental bond resolution on Oct. 29. That resolution was a formality to be adopted by the commission that approved the project in July, and it was known and accepted that this adoption was needed prior to the Nov. 5 election for the 2028 timeline to be met.

3. Prior to and following Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the Rays successfully met every one of our obligations required to move forward. Those include completing 50% design documents, securing financing, and more.

When Hurricane Milton took the roof off of Tropicana Field, we were devastated. We took solace in the fact that we had a clear, approved path to our new, state-of-the-art ballpark in our hometown for the 2028 MLB season. We knew we would have to figure out a way to make it through the 2025-2027 seasons, but we believed we could manage knowing our future home was in the works.

As we have informed the county administrator and St. Petersburg Mayor Ken Welch, the county's failure to finalize the bonds last month ended the ability for a 2028 delivery of the ballpark. As we have made clear at every step of this process, a 2029 ballpark delivery would result in significantly higher costs that we are not able to absorb alone.

We informed our many architects, builders and consultants that our agreement had not been honored by the county. There were dozens of people who were about to relocate to St. Petersburg along with their families. There were large contracts with long lead times. We suspended work on the entire project—the





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ballpark and the Historic Gas Plant District development.

The Rays organization is saddened and stunned by this unfortunate turn of events. We have put in decades of work and spent more than \$50 million to bring this historic project to reality – a project that had been approved by the City of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County. Now, that enormous investment of human and financial capital has been jeopardized by the county's failure to live up to its July agreement.

We remain grateful to our fans and our entire community. While we are focused on preparing for a unique 2025 season, we stand ready to work on a new solution with any and all willing partners to preserve the future of Major League Baseball in Tampa Bay for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Brian Auld
President, Tampa Bay Rays

Matt Silverman
President, Tampa Bay Rays

