Patrick Mantiega's column on the 'PURE' project in this week's edition of La Gaceta dated 2/4/22. When he wrote this, he did not know what the TCC vote would be.

“The Tampa Bay Times ran an editorial titled ‘The City Council Should Advance Tampa Water Project.’

When we saw it our first reaction was to wonder who paid for the editorial and how much did it cost, because it's a real propaganda piece for Mayor Castor's pet project PURE, which we more accurately call Toilet to Tap.

The Times pontificates that we need to stop wasting millions and millions of gallons of partially treated wastewater. The Times goes on to say that giving the PURE project another $1.5 million is the only way to stop the waste.

The editorial misleads its readers to believe the money will be used to explore different ways to use this wastewater. That money will go to a design-build contract with PCL Construction, which from the beginning has focused on an untried and very expensive way of using this wastewater. The plan is to pump this partially treated wastewater, that is not pure enough to drink, into the limestone aquifer below the Hillsborough River in the middle of the City of Tampa.

The water would be pumped back out from a separate well and put into the Hillsborough River, the water would be pumped out of the river, treated and served to you via your tap.

The 30 year-year cost could be as much a $6 billion.

This is the only plan the City and its hired gun, PCL Construction, is pushing, but there are a dozen or more ways to clean and use this wastewater that are less risky to our environment, use tested technologies and are cheaper.

The City and the Times says Friends of the River, Sierra Club of Tampa Bay and the League of Women Voters support the additional funding with several conditions. What the Times doesn't report is that none of those conditions are in the design-build contract with PCL.

We all agree that we need to use our water wisely, but this is more about fattening the pockets of PCL than it is to find the best way to use wastewater supported by science and the wise use of taxpayers' money."

~ Patrick Mantiega