

Community Resiliency & Sea Level Rise

Transforming our communities to become resilient is a monumental effort that will require coordination from local, state, and federal agencies. With over a trillion dollars of investment at risk, the business community is activating its involvement along with governmental agencies. Collectively, we can address this transformation. Vulnerabilities include sea level rise and the growing intensity of severe weather events.

Sea level rise will not only affect individual property owners across South Florida, but also our entire economy. Many communities have begun to address resiliency, but there is need for federal policy to support local initiatives.

This effort will require regulatory agencies to address infrastructure requirements in a comprehensive and systematic fashion. Such a prioritization of projects will position resiliency as a focal point for appropriations for decades to come as the investment will be significant. The return will be priceless.

Therefore, at the Washington Summit 2017, we are requesting three specific priorities:

1. That representatives join and actively participate in the bi-partisan Climate Solutions Caucus, led by Representative Ted Deutch (D-FL-22) and Representative Carlos Curbelo (R-FL-26). We also encourage senators to engage in bi-partisan resilience and sea level rise conversations, and to support such policies as a priority.
2. That the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commission a study that would itemize and prioritize South Florida infrastructure improvements projects for flood protection and risk reduction, such as upgrades to the intracoastal seawalls and the C&SF Flood Control System (to name two).
3. That disaster relief funding and technical support be provided to aid south Florida in the restoration and recovery from impacts of Hurricane Irma, with a focus on resilient planning, design and community infrastructure (including energy systems).

The Climate Solutions Caucus is a bi-partisan group in the U.S. House of Representatives focused on economically-viable options to reduce climate risk, and bi-partisan policy options to address the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Some call it a “Noah’s Ark” caucus, meaning that members can only join the caucus at the same time as a member of the opposing party. The caucus was founded in 2016 by South Florida Representatives Carlos Curbelo (R) and Ted Deutch (D), and now has 52 members, 26 republicans and 26 democrats.

The study requested of the U. S Army Corps of Engineers is required in order for projects to get into the cue for federal appropriation and to establish the federal interest in broadening regional flood protection efforts in south Florida.

- a. Federal Resiliency Project Examples and Needs
 - i. **Evaluate Flood Control System:** Seek evaluation by US Army Corps of Engineers of the C&SF Flood Control System for resilience and delivery of community level flood protection under conditions of sea level rise predicted during the next 80 years.
 - ii. **Upgrade Intracoastal Seawalls:** Petition the US Army Corps of Engineers and Congress to undertake a collective upgrade to the seawalls of the Intracoastal

Waterway to deliver community flood protection under conditions predicted with a 2-foot increase in sea level.

- iii. **Infrastructure Funding:** Seek congressional appropriation to aid local governments in expediting critical flood protection improvements and prominent resiliency pilot projects as models for community and coastal adaptation, coupled with green infrastructure (e.g., terraced sea wall, flood control berms).
- iv. **Expand Flood Protection Area:** Gain federal recognition of federal interest in flood protection for all of south Florida, inclusive of urban area between the barrier island and salinity control structures as part of the C&SF Flood Control System (currently limited to the Everglades, western communities, and the barrier island, ignoring the eastern communities that are now at increased flood risk).