

Becker & Client AFCA Work With State Leaders to Establish Statewide Resiliency Program to Address Flooding & Sea Level Rise

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Becker congratulates the Florida Legislature on passing - without reservation - **Senate Bill 1954, Statewide Flooding and Sea-level Rise Resilience**, introduced by Rep. Demi Busatta Cabrera (R-Coral Gables) and Sen. Ray Rodrigues (R-Ft. Myers). The bipartisan bill establishes statewide resiliency programs that assess and address inland and coastal flooding and sea level rise.

“Florida’s coastlines make the Sunshine State a top destination for business, recreation, and expansive living,” said **Ellyn Bogdanoff**, Becker Shareholder and lead lobbyist. “But they also make our communities vulnerable to flooding and sea level rise. Protecting the natural environment, Floridians, and their property is part of our unique responsibility, and this landmark legislation indicates full support from our State leaders for the work that lies ahead.”

Becker represents the American Flood Coalition Action (AFCA) - a non-profit organization committed to proactively resolving the issues of flooding and sea level rise - before the Florida Legislature and collaborated closely with AFCA’s Florida Director **Alec Bogdanoff**, Ph.D. to ensure the passage of this legislation by both the House and Senate.

“This legislation is a resounding message that Florida is ready to lead,” said Dr. Alec Bogdanoff of AFCA. “We applaud Speaker Sprowls, President Simpson, Representative Busatta Cabrera, Representative Bartleman, Senator Rodrigues, and the entire Florida Legislature for being champions of these innovative solutions and ushering in a new era for the State.”

Florida’s 1,350 miles of coastline at relatively low elevations mean many areas

are particularly vulnerable to coastal flooding. The combined effects of sea level rise, storm surges, and extreme rain events are expected to have a significant impact over time – a foreseeable challenge for which lawmakers have a duty to responsibly plan.

Senate Bill 1954, Statewide Flooding and Sea-level Rise Resilience, creates:

- the **Resilient Florida Grant Program** within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) which provides funding, subject to appropriation, to local governments for the costs of resilience planning and projects to adapt critical assets;
- the **Comprehensive Statewide Flood Vulnerability and Sea Level Rise Data Set and Assessment** to be updated every five years. The DEP must develop a statewide data set necessary to determine the risks to inland and coastal communities, including statewide sea level rise projections; and develop a statewide assessment, based on the statewide data set, which identifies vulnerable areas, infrastructure, and critical assets;
- the **Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan**, directing the DEP to annually submit a plan proposing up to \$100 million in funding for projects that address risks from flooding and sea level rise. The bill authorizes local governments, regional resilience entities, and water management districts to submit lists of proposed projects to the DEP for inclusion in the plan. The DEP must implement a scoring system, established in the bill, for assessing projects for inclusion in the plan;
- the **Florida Flood Hub for Applied Research and Innovation** in St. Petersburg, which will collect data and innovative practices from across the State. The Hub will be a model of statewide collaboration; and
- **regional resilience coalitions for community resilience planning**, empowering local communities to respond more effectively to flooding and sea level rise.

“[By establishing this infrastructure], Florida can be a national example of resilient communities,” said Florida House Speaker Chris Sprowls, “where water remains an engine that drives our state’s prosperity and the only thing the rising tide does is to lift all boats.”

Senate Bill 1954, Statewide Flooding and Sea-level Rise Resilience, now awaits the Governor’s signature. To read the bill in its entirety, please [click here](#).

To learn more about The American Flood Coalition Action, please [click here](#).