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Florida Legislature Passes Bill to Accelerate Upgrades to South Florida's Aging Flood Control System

Tallahassee, Fla – Today, the Florida Legislature passed legislation to combat flooding and sea level rise in the South Florida region. The bill now heads to the Governor's desk to be signed into law. [HB 513](#) /[SB 1326](#), championed by **Representative Robin Bartleman (D-Weston)**, **Representative Demi Busatta Cabrera (R- Coral Gables)** and **Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Homestead)**, establishes a comprehensive study of the infrastructural needs and funding gaps of the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Control Project.

The C&SF Project protects South Florida's 11 million residents, its economy, the South Florida Aquifer, and maintains the wellbeing of the Everglades. However, the C&SF Project is currently under substantial stress due to more intense rainfall and rising sea levels, and requires reevaluation focused on existing and future conditions.

“Sea level rise is a threat for communities across Florida and not just those nearest the coast. This legislation recognizes and prioritizes a flood control system that protects the homes, businesses, and lives of millions of everyday Floridians,” said **Kate Wesner**, Florida Director of the American Flood Coalition.

The population served by the C&SF Project is expected to grow to 15 million over the next 30 years. Southeast Florida has an annual GDP of \$359 billion, according to the [Business Case for Resilience in Southeast Florida Study](#) conducted by the Urban Land Institute, which also projects significant decreases in jobs, and lost sales and tourism revenues due to the negative impacts of unaddressed sea level rise. In a no-action scenario, flooding from sea level rise in coming decades could result in more than \$4.2 billion in property value loss, including property damages due to storm events.

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“South Florida has always been my home,” said **Representative Bartleman**, “and we must take decisive action to protect our community for the generations to come. The successful operation of our flood control system is critical to daily life in South Florida and even today the system is being challenged. We must adapt to rising sea levels and enhance flood protection to protect our 11 million residents and one-third

of Florida's economy by retrofitting and retooling our water management infrastructure. This legislation is a necessary component of Florida's historic investments in flood resilience."

"I'm proud to see this bipartisan legislation move through both chambers of the legislature. Sea level rise is a complex issue and it is critical that we devote the necessary resources to address it. The report that this bill creates will keep Florida's government informed on how to move forward on this issue." said **Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez**

House Prime Co-Sponsor, **Representative Demi Busatta Cabrera**, added, "South Floridians rely on the flood control system to protect them each and every day. It is vital infrastructure is at the foundation of the health and safety of our community. This legislation sends a beacon from Tallahassee that this important system must be upgraded and prioritized."

Under current law, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is required to annually publish, by September 1, a Sea Level Rise and Flood Resilience Plan. **HB 513/ SB 1326** directs the SFWMD to consolidate the portions of the Plan related to the C&SF Resiliency Study and submit the document to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Governor, the Senate President, and Speaker of the House by October 1, annually. The success of the C&SF System is dependent on continued financial and policy investments in flooding and sea level rise by the Florida Legislature.

"The Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Control Project is the backbone of South Florida's flood protection, holding \$198.5 billion in taxable value in Broward County alone, yet this system is under serious stress and necessitates greater investment and oversight," said **Mayor Michael Udine, Broward County Mayor**, "Thank you to Representative Bartleman, Senator Rodriguez, Representative Busatta Cabrera, our numerous cosponsors on both sides of the aisle for their commitment to this issue and to the entire Florida Legislature for taking action against the realities of flooding and sea level rise. I urge Governor DeSantis to sign this important piece of legislation and continue to invest in resiliency efforts across the State of Florida."

"On behalf of Miami-Dade County, I want to thank the Florida Legislature for establishing this critical report to address the impacts of sea level rise on our water management infrastructure. These efforts will help to protect not only our environment but also the economic assets of our region," said **Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, Miami- Dade Mayor**. "With this funding, the South Florida Water Management District will move to protect billions of dollars of local property. I applaud Senator Rodríguez, Representative Bartleman, Representative Busatta Cabrera and the State Legislature for their efforts towards resiliency."

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