

THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE



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Florida's Legislative Leaders Approve Funding to Support Hurricane Recovery

Tallahassee—Florida House Speaker Chris Sprowls (R-Palm Harbor) and Senate President Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby) together with incoming leadership of the Florida Legislature, Senate President-Designate Kathleen Passidomo (R-Naples) and House Speaker-Designate Paul Renner (R-Palm Coast) today will announce an emergency meeting of Florida's Legislative Budget Commission (LBC) to release additional funds to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund in support of the state response to Hurricane Ian, led by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

Senate President Wilton Simpson: "Under the outstanding leadership of Governor DeSantis, the swift mobilization of resources across executive agencies and the diligence, compassion, and tireless work ethic demonstrated by Florida's emergency response officials has been remarkable. While you pray they never come your way, disasters like Hurricane Ian are exactly what we had in mind when we set aside historic state reserves. Funds released by the Legislature and distributed by Governor DeSantis will fund key response and recovery programs, including the Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program, which ensures that vital businesses like Florida's farms can survive this disaster. My Senate colleagues and I are tremendously grateful to Governor DeSantis and his entire team across state government for leading this critical recovery effort.

House Speaker Chris Sprowls: "As Floridians continue to grapple with the devastation and destruction wreaked by Hurricane Ian, the Florida House is poised to help with ongoing recovery efforts through necessary funding from reserves. We proposed and passed Florida's first Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund to ensure that the Governor could react quickly in a declared state of emergency like this one. Our hearts and prayers go out to the residents who lost so much in this storm — their homes, their belongings, and devastatingly, their loved ones. Together, we will rebuild and remain ready for whatever comes."

Senate President-Designate Kathleen Passidomo: “The support of our Governor and Legislative leadership means a great deal to the Southwest Florida communities and constituents I represent as we begin the process of rebuilding homes and businesses devastated by Hurricane Ian. Releasing additional emergency response funds in support of the tremendous recovery and rebuilding efforts Governor DeSantis is leading will help fund key relief that directly benefits struggling Floridians. I continue to be inspired by the sense of community I am witnessing each and every day. This is a difficult time for all impacted, but I have great faith in the strong and resilient people of Southwest Florida, and I know we will pull through this together.”

House Speaker-Designate Paul Renner: “Governor DeSantis and the First Lady have shown great leadership during the recovery efforts from Hurricane Ian. The Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund set aside \$500 million before the hurricane season for immediate hurricane response. These additional funds will ensure more resources are immediately available to aid in our state’s recovery needs. We stand united in our prayers and commitment to everyone affected by this devastating storm. We will remain laser-focused in support of the historic response efforts over the months ahead as Floridians continue to recover.”

Background:

Earlier this year, the Legislature created an Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund (Chapters 2022-1 and 2022-2, L.O.F.), which specifically dedicates a portion of Florida’s reserve funds to disaster relief. The legislation immediately transferred \$500 million from General Revenue to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund for use by the Governor in coordinating the state’s response to a declared state of emergency. The legislation also authorized the Governor to request the LBC to transfer or appropriate additional funds from state reserves to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund as needed.

To prepare for emergencies like Hurricane Ian, Florida’s Legislature and Governor DeSantis have worked to build up Florida’s state reserves to an historic level. Over the last decade, total state reserves ranged from 10.8% to 27.2% of the state’s estimated General Revenue collections. However, in the [Long Range Financial Outlook](#) approved by the LBC last month, total state reserves are projected to be a record \$17.4 billion or 41.3% of the General Revenue estimate for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

The LBC will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 12, 2022, in Tallahassee. Pursuant to Florida law, meetings of the LBC require a seven day notice. Members are permitted by law to attend telephonically. For more information, please visit [Online Sunshine](#), a joint website of the Florida Legislature.

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