



THE FLORIDA SENATE
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President

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Robust Hurricane Relief, Recovery, and Response Legislation Passes Senate
SB 180 by Senator DiCeglie Helps Floridians to Rebuild and Fortify Homes, Enhances Resiliency Planning and Emergency Readiness

Tallahassee—The Florida Senate today [HOLD: unanimously] passed Senate Bill 180, Emergency Preparedness and Response, by Senator Nick DiCeglie (R-Indian Rocks Beach), to bolster hurricane relief and recovery and enhance response efforts in Florida.

SB 180 supports Florida homeowners rebuilding after a storm with clear, streamlined permitting resources and improves debris management and removal. The bill also increases disaster management planning, emergency resource coordination, financial transparency, and reporting across state and local government disaster management entities.

“Multiple major hurricanes ravaged Florida last year, leaving extensive damage statewide,” said Senator DiCeglie, whose hometown and district were among the hardest hit during the 2024 Hurricane Season. “After a storm, Floridians need a clear path to recovery, not roadblocks. When local bureaucracy overshadows the needs of citizens, Floridians are left picking up the pieces. We’re fighting for families to focus on rebuilding without additional delays or burdens, especially for those who sustained damage or lost their homes. Working with our state and local emergency responders, we can streamline restoration efforts and improve emergency response coordination, fortifying and strengthening our communities before the next storm.”

“Florida has set a high bar as the nation’s model in storm response and recovery,” said President Albritton, whose district experienced major inland flooding and agriculture and citrus loss during the 2024 Hurricane Season. “It’s a testament to our first responders and emergency personnel, as well as the strength and resilience of Floridians in the aftermath of a devastating hurricane. We can always do better. We are incorporating lessons learned and identifying new opportunities to support community restoration and enhance disaster management through proactive planning and coordination. Through these initiatives, Floridians can focus on what matters most: rebuilding their homes, their lives, and their communities.”

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SB 180, Emergency Preparedness and Response

Prohibits Local Governments from Increasing Permit and Inspection Fees

The bill prohibits local governments from increasing building permit or inspection fees for 180 days after a hurricane or tropical storm emergency declaration by the Governor or federal government.

Improves Debris Management and Removal

The bill requires local governments to establish at least one debris management site, approved through the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Sites must be pre-authorized annually. As part of post-disaster permitting planning, local governments must also set out the procedures and resources necessary to promote fast debris removal.

Expedites Local Beach Restoration

The bill allows the DEP to waive or reduce the match requirements for beach renourishment projects for local governments for beaches located in counties impacted by the 2024 hurricanes.

Creates Local Rebuilding Permitting Guide and Permitting Plans to Streamline Restoration of Private Property

Permitting Guide: The bill requires local governments to post a recovery permitting guide so property owners are aware of the types of repairs that require permits and those that do not, the post-storm application process, and other rebuilding requirements specific to the local area. The guide must be updated annually by May 1 and as soon as practicable following a hurricane or tropical storm.

Post-Disaster Permitting Planning: The bill requires local governments to develop post-storm permitting plans that provide for special building permits and inspection procedures, updated annually by May 1. Local governments must ensure sufficient personnel are prepared and available post-storm for expeditious building inspections, permitting, and enforcement tasks. This includes mutual aid agreements to bring in additional staff and train them. Local governments must also lay out multiple locations where building permit services will be offered in person, during regular business hours at a minimum. They must set out an expedited permitting protocol and waiver or reduction, if practicable, of fees. The bill also requires local governments to have extra staff for 180 days after a declared hurricane or tropical storm to process permits.

Provides Tax Savings for Damaged Agriculture Equipment

The bill provides that certain agricultural equipment that was unable to be used for 60 days due to the 2024 hurricanes can be assessed at salvage value on the 2025 property tax roll. This property tax assessment limitation applies retroactively from January 1, 2025.

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Clarifies Florida National Guard Medical Services During a Disaster

The bill allows a servicemember trained to provide medical care (licensed, certified, etc.) who is assigned to a medical duty position (nurse, medic, etc.) while serving with or in support of the Florida National Guard, pursuant to federal or state orders, to provide medical care to military personnel or civilians during an emergency or declared disaster.

Increases Training Opportunities for Local Officials

The bill requires the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to establish biennial training requirements for local government officials with emergency management roles and to provide/coordinate mandatory emergency management training for local elected and appointed leaders.

Expands Pre-Season Readiness Planning and Activities

The bill requires DEM to conduct annual hurricane readiness sessions in each region by April 1 each year. The local emergency management director or designee must attend. Sessions will include guidance on timelines for preparation and response, expedited rebuilding, and best practices on coordination, among other topics.

Improves Financial Transparency of State Spending on Disaster Relief

The bill requires specific reporting on hurricane spending and activities conducted by state agencies. This includes posting contracts on the state's contract system, FACTS, and posting audits. The bill also requires annual reporting after hurricane season on expenditures, inventory, and key actions taken.

Enhances Resiliency Planning with Updates to the Natural Hazards Risks and Mitigation Interagency Coordinating Group

The bill enhances the role of resiliency planning in state government by requiring agency heads from specific agencies to participate in regular group meetings, discussions, and recommendations on risk mitigation through strategies or legislative action.

Streamlines Implementation and Coordination of the Federal Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program

The bill codifies the state's administration of this federal program, allowing the state to retain up to 25% of the funds for use by the state in the affected areas. Local governments may voluntarily share a portion of their allocation with the state for regional projects, prioritizing shelters and mitigation projects that support infrastructure, schools, and retrofitting of local EOCs, among others. Fiscally constrained counties may request assistance from DEM to administer the funds. DEM will be required to submit an annual report to the Legislature on funding and grant projects administered by the program.

Expanding Planning, Response, and Recovery Coordination and Reporting on Emergency Management Capabilities with the Department of Emergency Management

- Requires DEM to develop a template for locals to use for comprehensive emergency management plans and establish procedures for coordinating and monitoring statewide mutual aid agreements reimbursable under federal public disaster assistance programs.
- Requires DEM to complete an inventory of all disaster response equipment, in addition to portable generators as currently required.
- Creates legislative intent for all state agencies, political subdivisions, and private agencies to coordinate to the greatest extent possible to provide emergency management response and recovery efforts.
- Incorporates the current standalone biennial statewide emergency management capabilities report into the State Emergency Management Comprehensive Plan, as recommended by DEM.
- Adds the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to the list of agencies that help identify people with special needs for special needs sheltering, as DVA maintains nursing home facilities across the state.
- Requires state and local entities to notify DEM before storm season of the emergency manager or director and any designees.
- Specifies that state agencies must coordinate with DEM on long-term post-disaster activities.
- Combines the Shelter Report into one annual report, to include a plan, needs, and a list of priority facilities to be retrofitted, as requested by DEM. Requires the shelter retrofit list to prioritize non-school public facilities and shelter deficits by county rather than by regional planning council.
- Requires APD to assist DEM in determining needs for shelter space to accommodate persons with disabilities, including those with autism.
- Amends the shelter retrofit funds (\$3 million annually) to prioritize publicly owned buildings that are not schools, to help move shelters from schools, invest and shore up local facilities, and address shelter deficit by county.

For more information, please visit <http://www.FLSenate.gov>.

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