



## THE FLORIDA SENATE

### APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, TOURISM, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

**Tallahassee**—The Florida Senate today unanimously passed Senate Bill 180, Emergencies, by Senator Nick DiCeglie (R-Indian Rocks Beach), to bolster hurricane relief and recovery and enhance response efforts in Florida. The bill will be sent to Governor DeSantis in the coming days.

SB 180 supports Florida homeowners rebuilding after a storm with clear, streamlined permitting resources and clarification about rebuilding guidelines to ensure families can make the repairs they need without being hit with a higher tax bill. 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. 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.”

## **Summary of SB 180, Emergencies**

### **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.

### **Clarifies Home Rebuilding Guidelines**

The bill provides that a homeowner may increase the size of a residence up to a total size of 2,000 sq ft (up from 1,500 in current law) or to 130 percent (up from 110 percent in current law) of the size before the damage, before the additional space will have to be assessed as new for tax purposes. With this change, the bill recognizes the average size of homes today is larger than a couple of decades ago to ensure families can make the repairs they need without being hit with a higher tax bill. The bill also prohibits local cumulative repair “lookback periods,” allowing more flexibility and fairness in damage assessments by focusing on substantial damage caused by the current event instead of a homeowner’s repair history.

### **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. Information in the guide must be updated annually by May 1 and on the local government website 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 available, as soon as practicable, after a declared hurricane or tropical storm to process permits.

### **Clarifies Florida National Guard Medical Services During a Disaster**

The bill allows a servicemember trained to provide medical care who is assigned to a medical duty position while serving with or in support of the Florida National Guard, pursuant to federal or state orders, to provide medical care within the scope of their professional licensure 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.

### **Expands Planning, Response, and Recovery Coordination and Reporting on Emergency Management Capabilities with the Division 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 accounting of all inventory and assets purchased for each emergency event.
- 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.
- 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 the Department of Health and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities 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.

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