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An act relating to hurricane damage mitigation; amending s. 215.5586, F.S.; redesignating the Florida Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation Program as the My Safe Florida Home Program; providing additional duties of the Department of Financial Services; providing additional legislative intent; revising criteria and requirements for wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspections; requiring the department to maintain a list of certain inspectors; revising requirements for mitigation grants; authorizing inspectors to participate as contractors under certain circumstances; providing for priorities of grants; requiring the department to develop a grant applications verification and collection process; requiring the department to transfer certain appropriated funds to Volunteer Florida Foundation, Inc., for certain purposes; specifying duties of Volunteer Florida Foundation, Inc.; authorizing the department to undertake a statewide consumer information campaign; requiring the advisory council to advise and assist the department in administering the program; expanding the department's authorization to enhance financial resource funding of the program; revising the department's rulemaking authority; deleting provisions authorizing the department to contract with not-for-profit corporations; requiring the department to develop a no-interest loan program; providing program requirements and limitations; requiring the department to pay certain creditors from funds appropriated for the

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program; providing loan eligibility criteria; requiring the department to set aside certain funds for program purposes; requiring the department to adopt rules; providing for public outreach for contractors and real estate brokers and licensed sales associates; authorizing the department to contract for grants management, inspection services, education outreach, and auditing services; providing additional legislative intent; requiring the department to make annual reports on the program; providing report requirements; creating s. 1004.647, F.S.; creating the Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center of Excellence at Florida State University; providing purposes; providing responsibilities of the center; amending s. 489.115, F.S.; including wind mitigation methodologies under certain continuing education requirements for contractors; amending ss. 4, 39, and 42 of ch. 2006-12, Laws of Florida; providing conforming changes to the redesignation of the Florida Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation Program; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

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Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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Section 1. Section 215.5586, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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 $215.5586 \quad \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \text{Florida} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \text{Comprehensive Hurricane} \\ \\ \underline{\text{Damage Mitigation}} \quad \text{Program.--There is established within the} \\ \\ \underline{\text{Department of Financial Services the}} \quad \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \text{Florida} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \\ \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Florida}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{My Safe}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}} \\ \underline{\text{Home}} \quad \underline{\text{Home}$ 

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Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation Program. The department shall provide fiscal accountability, contract management, and strategic leadership for the program, consistent with this section. This section does not create an entitlement for property owners or obligate the state in any way to fund the inspection or retrofitting of residential property in this state. Implementation of this program is subject to annual legislative appropriations. It is the intent of the Legislature that the My Safe Florida Home Program provide inspections for at least 400,000 site-built, single-family, residential properties and provide grants to at least 35,000 applicants before June 30, 2009. The program shall be administered by an individual with prior executive experience in the private sector in the areas of insurance, business, or construction. The program shall develop and implement a comprehensive and coordinated approach for hurricane damage mitigation that shall include the following:

- (1) WIND CERTIFICATION AND HURRICANE MITIGATION INSPECTIONS.--
- (a) Free home-retrofit inspections of site-built, single-family, residential property, including single family, two-family, three-family, or four-family residential units, shall be offered throughout the state to determine what mitigation measures are needed, what insurance premium discounts may be available, and what improvements to existing residential properties are needed to reduce the property's vulnerability to hurricane damage. The Department of Financial Services shall establish a request for proposals to solicit proposals from wind certification entities to provide free at no cost to homeowners

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wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspections. The inspections provided to homeowners, at a minimum, must include:

- 1. A home inspection and report that summarizes the results and identifies corrective actions a homeowner may take to mitigate hurricane damage.
- 2. A range of cost estimates regarding the mitigation features.
- 3. Insurer-specific information regarding premium discounts correlated to recommended mitigation features identified by the inspection.
- 4. A hurricane resistance rating scale specifying the home's current as well as projected wind resistance capabilities.
- (b) To qualify for selection by the department as a provider of wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspections, the entity shall, at a minimum:
- 1. Use wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspectors who:
- a. Have prior experience in residential construction or inspection and have received specialized training in hurricane mitigation procedures. Such training may be provided by a class offered online or in person.
- b. Have undergone drug testing and level 2 background checks pursuant to s. 435.04. The department is authorized to conduct criminal record checks of inspectors. Inspectors must submit a set of the fingerprints to the department for state and national criminal history checks and must pay the fingerprint processing fee set forth in s. 624.501. The fingerprints shall

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be sent by the department to the Department of Law Enforcement and forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for processing. The results shall be returned to the department for screening. The fingerprints shall be taken by a law enforcement agency, designated examination center, or other department-approved entity. Wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspectors participating in the program on the effective date of this act shall have until June 1, 2007, to meet the requirements for a criminal record check.

- c. Have been certified, in a manner satisfactory to the department, to conduct the inspections.
- 2. Provide a quality assurance program including a reinspection component.
- (c) An application for an inspection must contain a signed or electronically verified statement made under penalty of perjury that the applicant has submitted only a single application.
- (d) The owner of a site-built, single-family, residential property may apply for and receive an inspection without also applying for a grant pursuant to subsection (2) and without meeting the requirements of paragraph (2)(a).
- (e) The department shall develop and maintain as a public record a current list of wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspectors authorized to conduct wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspections pursuant to this section.
- (2) <u>MITIGATION</u> GRANTS.--Financial grants shall be used to encourage single-family, site-built, owner-occupied, residential

property owners to retrofit their properties to make them less vulnerable to hurricane damage.

- (a) To be eligible for a grant, a residential property must:
- 1. Have been granted a homestead exemption under chapter 196.
- 2. Be a dwelling with an insured value of \$500,000 or less. Homeowners who are low-income persons, as defined in s. 420.0004(10), are exempt from this requirement.
- 3. Have undergone an acceptable wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspection, if the property is an existing structure.

- An application for a grant must contain a signed or electronically verified statement made under penalty of perjury that the applicant has submitted only a single application and must have attached documents demonstrating the applicant meets the requirements of this paragraph. A residential property which is part of a multifamily residential unit may receive a grant only if all homeowners participate and the total number of units does not exceed four.
- (b) All grants must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis for a total of \$10,000 for the actual cost of the mitigation project with the state's contribution not to exceed \$5,000.
- (c) The program shall create a process in which mitigation contractors agree to participate and seek reimbursement from the state and homeowners select from a list of participating

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contractors. All mitigation must be based upon the securing of all required local permits and inspections. Mitigation projects are subject to random reinspection of up to at least <u>5</u> 10 percent of all projects. Wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspectors qualifying for the program may also participate as mitigation contractors as long as the inspectors meet the department's qualifications and certification requirements for mitigation contractors.

- (d) Matching fund grants shall also be made available to local governments and nonprofit entities for projects that will reduce hurricane damage to single-family, site-built, owner-occupied, residential property.
  - (e) Grants may be used for the following improvements:
  - 1. Roof deck attachment.
  - 2. Secondary water barrier.
  - 3. Roof covering.

- 4. Brace gable ends.
- 5. Reinforce roof-to-wall connections.
- 6. Opening protection.
- 7. Exterior doors, including garage doors.
- (f) Grants may be used on a previously inspected existing structure or on a rebuild. A rebuild is defined as a site-built, single-family dwelling under construction to replace a home that was destroyed or significantly damaged by a hurricane and deemed unlivable by a regulatory authority. The homeowner must have had a homestead exemption prior to the hurricane and maintained the homestead exemption.

(g) Low-income homeowners, as defined in s. 420.0004(10), who otherwise meet the requirements of paragraphs (a), (c), (e), and (f) are eligible for a grant of up to \$5,000 and are not required to provide a matching amount to receive the grant.

Additionally, for low-income homeowners, grant funding may be used for repair to existing structures leading to any of the mitigation improvements provided in paragraph (e), limited to 20 percent of the grant value. The program may accept a certification directly from a low-income homeowner that the homeowner meets the requirements of s. 420.0004(10) if the homeowner provides such certification in a signed or electronically verified statement made under penalty of perjury.

- (h) Priority of grants shall be given to site-built, single-family, residential properties:
- 1. Built prior to the adoption of the American Society of Civil Engineers Standard 7, 2002 edition (ACSE 7-02) into the Florida Building Code;
  - 2. In coastal counties;

- 3. In interior counties significantly impacted by the hurricanes of 2004 and 2005; or
- 4. Insured by Citizens Property Insurance Corporation in the high risk account.
- (i) The department shall develop a process that ensures the most efficient means to collect and verify grant applications to determine eligibility and may direct wind certification inspectors to collect and verify grant application information or use the Internet or other electronic means to collect information and determine eligibility.

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million from funds appropriated to the program, including up to 5 percent for administrative costs, to Volunteer Florida

Foundation, Inc., for provision of inspections and grants to low-income homeowners, as defined in s. 420.0004(10), consistent with this section. Volunteer Florida Foundation, Inc., shall be responsible for inspections and grants management for low-income homeowners and shall report its activities and account for state funds on a quarterly and annual basis to the Chief Financial Officer, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

- undertake a statewide multimedia public outreach and advertising campaign to inform consumers of the availability and benefits of hurricane inspections and of the safety and financial benefits of residential hurricane damage mitigation. The department may seek out and use local, state, federal, and private funds to support the campaign. Multimedia public education, awareness, and advertising efforts designed to specifically address mitigation techniques shall be employed, as well as a component to support ongoing consumer resources and referral services.
- (4) ADVISORY COUNCIL.--There is created an advisory council to provide advice and assistance to the <u>department regarding program administrator with regard to his or her</u> administration of the program. The advisory council shall consist of:

(a) A representative of lending institutions, selected by the Financial Services Commission from a list of at least three persons recommended by the Florida Bankers Association.

- (b) A representative of residential property insurers, selected by the Financial Services Commission from a list of at least three persons recommended by the Florida Insurance Council.
- (c) A representative of home builders, selected by the Financial Services Commission from a list of at least three persons recommended by the Florida Home Builders Association.
- (d) A faculty member of a state university, selected by the Financial Services Commission, who is an expert in hurricane-resistant construction methodologies and materials.
- (e) Two members of the House of Representatives, selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (f) Two members of the Senate, selected by the President of the Senate.
- (g) The Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc., or his or her designee.
- (h) The senior officer of the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund.
- (i) The executive director of Citizens Property Insurance Corporation.
- 272 (j) The director of the Division of Emergency Management 273 of the Department of Community Affairs.
  - Members appointed under paragraphs (a)-(d) shall serve at the pleasure of the Financial Services Commission. Members appointed

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under paragraphs (e) and (f) shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing officer. All other members shall serve voting ex officio. Members of the advisory council shall serve without compensation but may receive reimbursement as provided in s. 112.061 for per diem and travel expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

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- (5) FEDERAL FUNDING.--The department may seek out and leverage local, state, federal, or private funds to enhance shall use its best efforts to obtain grants or funds from the federal government to supplement the financial resources of the program, consistent with this section.
- RULES. -- The Department of Financial Services shall adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to govern governing the Florida Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation program, implement the provisions of this section, including rules governing wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspections, mitigation contractors, and training of inspectors and contractors, and carry out the duties of the department under this section. The department shall also adopt rules establishing priorities for grants provided under this section based on objective criteria that gives priority to reducing the state's probable maximum loss from hurricanes. However, pursuant to this overall goal, the department may further establish priorities based on the insured value of the dwelling, whether or not the dwelling is insured by Citizens Property Insurance Corporation and whether or not the area under consideration has sufficient resources and the ability to perform the retrofitting required.

(7) CONTRACTS WITH NOT FOR PROFIT CORPORATIONS. The Department of Financial Services is authorized to contract with not-for-profit corporations to conduct all or portions of the program and to increase the awareness of the benefits of mitigation among homeowners in this state. The department shall consider the not-for-profit corporation's ability to raise funds from the private sector to provide for mitigation grants, as well as administrative capabilities for conducting other business related to the program.

- (7)(8) WIND CERTIFICATION AND HURRICANE MITIGATION INSPECTOR LIST.--The department shall develop and maintain as a public record a current list of wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspectors authorized to conduct wind certification and hurricane mitigation inspections pursuant to this section.
- (8) NO-INTEREST LOANS.--The department shall develop a nointerest loan program by December 31, 2007, to encourage the
  private sector to provide loans to owners of site-built, singlefamily, residential property to pay for mitigation measures
  listed in subsection (2). A loan eligible for interest payments
  pursuant to this subsection may be for a term of up to 3 years
  and cover up to \$5,000 in mitigation measures. The department
  shall pay the creditor the market rate of interest using funds
  appropriated for the My Safe Florida Home program. In no case
  shall the department pay more than the interest rate set by s.
  687.03. To be eligible for a loan, a loan applicant must first
  obtain a home inspection and report that specifies what
  improvements are needed to reduce the property's vulnerability
  to windstorm damage pursuant to this section and meet loan

underwriting requirements set by the lender. The department shall set aside \$10 million from funds appropriated for the My Safe Florida Home program to implement this subsection. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.36(1) and 120.54 to implement this subsection.

- BROKERS AND SALES ASSOCIATES.--The program shall develop brochures for distribution to general contractors, roofing contractors, and real estate brokers and sales associates licensed under part I of chapter 475 explaining the benefits to homeowners of residential hurricane damage mitigation. The program shall encourage contractors to distribute the brochures to homeowners at the first meeting with a homeowner who is considering contracting for home or roof repairs or contracting for the construction of a new home. The program shall encourage real estate brokers and sales associates licensed under part I of chapter 475 to distribute the brochures to clients prior to the purchase of a home. The brochures may be made available electronically.
- with third parties for grants management, inspection services, educational outreach, and auditing services. Such contracts shall be considered direct costs of the program and shall not be subject to administrative cost limits, but contracts valued at \$500,000 or more shall be subject to review and approval by the Legislative Budget Commission. The department shall contract with providers that have a demonstrated record of successful business operations in areas directly related to the services to

be provided and shall ensure the highest accountability for use of state funds, consistent with this section.

- (11) INTENT.--It is the intent of the Legislature that grants made to residential property owners under this section shall be considered disaster-relief assistance within the meaning of s. 139 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.
- on the activities of the program that shall account for the use of state funds and indicate the number of inspections requested, the number of inspections performed, the number of grant applications received, and the number and value of grants approved. The report shall be delivered to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by February 1 of each year.

Section 2. Section 1004.647, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1004.647 Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center of Excellence.--The Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center of Excellence is created at the Florida State University, College of Business, Department of Risk Management. The purpose of the center is to promote and disseminate research on issues related to hurricane catastrophe loss and to assist in identifying and developing education and research grant funding opportunities among higher education institutions in this state and the private sector. The purpose of activities of the center is to support the state's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from catastrophic storms. The center shall:

(1) Coordinate and disseminate applied research efforts that are expected to have an immediate impact on policy and practices related to windstorm mitigation.

- (2) Coordinate and disseminate information related to catastrophic storm risk management, including, but not limited to, research and information that would benefit businesses, consumers, and public policy makers. Areas of interest may include storm forecasting, loss modeling, building construction and mitigation, and risk management strategies. Through its efforts, the center shall facilitate Florida's preparedness for and responsiveness to catastrophic storms.
- (3) Create and promote studies that enhance the educational options available to risk management and insurance students.
  - (4) Publish and disseminate findings.
- (5) Organize and sponsor conferences, symposia, and workshops to educate consumers and policymakers.
- Section 3. Paragraph (b) of subsection (4) of section 489.115, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
- 489.115 Certification and registration; endorsement; reciprocity; renewals; continuing education.--

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(b)1. Each certificateholder or registrant shall provide proof, in a form established by rule of the board, that the certificateholder or registrant has completed at least 14 classroom hours of at least 50 minutes each of continuing education courses during each biennium since the issuance or renewal of the certificate or registration. The board shall

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establish by rule that a portion of the required 14 hours must deal with the subject of workers' compensation, business practices, wind mitigation methodologies, and workplace safety. The board shall by rule establish criteria for the approval of continuing education courses and providers, including requirements relating to the content of courses and standards for approval of providers, and may by rule establish criteria for accepting alternative nonclassroom continuing education on an hour-for-hour basis. The board shall prescribe by rule the continuing education, if any, which is required during the first biennium of initial licensure. A person who has been licensed for less than an entire biennium must not be required to complete the full 14 hours of continuing education.

2. In addition, the board may approve specialized continuing education courses on compliance with the wind resistance provisions for one and two family dwellings contained in the Florida Building Code and any alternate methodologies for providing such wind resistance which have been approved for use by the Florida Building Commission or wind mitigation methodologies approved by the Department of Financial Services. Division I certificateholders or registrants who demonstrate proficiency upon completion of such specialized courses may certify plans and specifications for one and two family dwellings to be in compliance with the code or alternate methodologies, as appropriate, except for dwellings located in floodways or coastal hazard areas as defined in ss. 60.3D and E of the National Flood Insurance Program.

3. Each certificateholder or registrant shall provide to the board proof of completion of the core curriculum courses, or passing the equivalency test of the Building Code Training Program established under s. 553.841, specific to the licensing category sought, within 2 years after commencement of the program or of initial certification or registration, whichever is later. Classroom hours spent taking core curriculum courses shall count toward the number required for renewal of certificates or registration. A certificateholder or registrant who passes the equivalency test in lieu of taking the core curriculum course shall receive full credit for core curriculum course hours.

- 4. The board shall require, by rule adopted pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54, a specified number of hours in specialized or advanced module courses, approved by the Florida Building Commission, on any portion of the Florida Building Code, adopted pursuant to part VII of chapter 553, relating to the contractor's respective discipline.
- Section 4. Sections 4, 39, and 42 of chapter 2006-12, Laws of Florida, are amended to read:
- Section 4. Of the funds appropriated for the My Safe Florida Home Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation Program specified in s. 215.5586, Florida Statutes, as created by this act, \$22.5 \$7.5 million shall be for the Manufactured Housing and Mobile Home Mitigation and Enhancement Program specified in s. 215.559(4)(b), Florida Statutes, as created by this act. The Department of Financial Services shall use these funds to contract with Tallahassee Community College to implement the

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Manufactured Housing and Mobile Home Mitigation and Enhancement Program.

Section 39. (1) The Office of Insurance Regulation, in consultation with the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of Financial Services, the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, the Florida Insurance Council, the Florida Home Builders Association, the Florida Manufactured Housing Association, the Risk and Insurance Department of Florida State University, and the Institute for Business and Homes Safety, shall study and develop a program that will provide an objective rating system that will allow homeowners to evaluate the relative ability of Florida properties to withstand the wind load from a sustained severe tropical storm or hurricane.

- (2) The rating system will be designed in a manner that is easy to understand for the property owner, based on proven readily verifiable mitigation techniques and devices, and able to be implemented based on a visual inspection program. The Department of Financial Services shall implement a pilot program for use in the My Safe Florida Home Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation Program.
- (3) The Department shall provide a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by March 31, 2007, detailing the nature and construction of the rating scale, its effectiveness based on implementation in a pilot program, and an operational plan for statewide implementation of the rating scale.
- Section 42. (1) For the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the sum of \$250 million is appropriated on a nonrecurring basis from the

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General Revenue Fund to the Insurance Regulatory Trust Fund in the Department of Financial Services for purposes of the My Safe Florida Home Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation Program specified in s. 215.5586, Florida Statutes, as created by this act. The department shall establish a separate account within the trust fund for accounting purposes.

- (2) The sum of \$250 million is appropriated from the Insurance Regulatory Trust Fund in the Department of Financial Services for the purposes set forth in subsection (1). The department may expend up to 1 percent of the funds appropriated to administer the program. Beginning October 15, 2007, and quarterly thereafter, the Chief Financial Officer shall provide a report to the Executive Office of the Governor and the chair and vice chair of the Legislative Budget Commission containing information regarding expenditures made for the purposes set forth in subsection (1).
- (3) Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, to the contrary, the unexpended balance of appropriations authorized in subsections (1) and (2) shall not revert until June 30, 2009.
- Section 5. For the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the nonrecurring sum of \$1 million is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education for the purpose of funding the Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center of Excellence as created by this act.
  - Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.