



Memorandum of Understanding Creating the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition

WHEREAS, the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition has been formed to coordinate climate adaptation and mitigation activities across county lines, to advance local and regional responses to and preparations for economic and social disruption projected to result from sea-level rise, and to provide state and local agencies with access to technical assistance and support in addressing the effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, the Counties of Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee and Sarasota of the Tampa Bay region and the municipalities within (the “Coalition Members”), are a unique and extraordinary area, sharing a sense of community, economy, and critically important environmental resources; and

WHEREAS, the Tampa Bay region has some of Florida’s most remarkable beaches, rivers, estuaries and springs which are closely coupled to the region’s cultural heritage; and

WHEREAS, the Tampa Bay region has approximately 4 million residents, which represents approximately 19% of Florida’s population, and is projected to exceed 5 million residents by 2040; and

WHEREAS, the Tampa Bay region has a Gross Domestic Product of more than \$2.5 billion annually, more than 37% of statewide economic output; and

WHEREAS, the resiliency of the Tampa Bay region’s economic, environmental and social health relies on crucial coastal transportation infrastructure, including: seaports, rail systems, roads, and airports; and

WHEREAS, the Tampa Bay region is vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate, including: sea-level rise, rainfall, heat events, wildfires, droughts, flooding and storms, which threaten current community priorities, human wellbeing and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, rising sea levels, intense rainfall and other climatic stresses will compromise crucial drainage infrastructure and drinking water supplies (through saltwater intrusion into rivers and the aquifer); and

WHEREAS, extreme weather events can impact the lives of residents, damage property and disrupt businesses; and

WHEREAS, natural areas including forests, beaches with dunes, wetlands, mangroves, and oyster reefs can provide valuable flood risk reduction and water quality benefits and may be compromised by changing climate conditions; and

WHEREAS, climate resiliency is the planning for and implementation of activities to reduce the Tampa Bay region’s vulnerability to a changing climate, and is amongst the most consequential actions the Tampa Bay region could pursue; and

WHEREAS, the Coalition Members are committed to being resilient to a changing climate, and will consider adaptation and risk reduction strategies intended to ensure public safety and safeguard infrastructure, property, environmental assets, and basic quality of life for current residents and future generations; and

WHEREAS, many of the activities undertaken to enhance resiliency to a changing climate will be concurrent with existing local efforts and objectives addressing aging infrastructure, emergency management, and public health; and

WHEREAS, while counties and cities in the Tampa Bay region have independently identified and undertaken activities to address vulnerabilities, a collaborative commitment working together to build the region’s resiliency will best serve the Tampa Bay region; and

WHEREAS, proactively preparing for a changing climate will be less costly and enhance the major sectors of the regional economy, maintaining and growing manufacturing, health care, tourism, agriculture and other economic segments; and

WHEREAS, measures to mitigate hazard risks provide a significant return on investment because resilient communities and regions support a thriving economy and create opportunities to attract new businesses and economic investments; and

WHEREAS, local governments play a critical role in fostering social equity in the face of climate related challenges, including the potential for community displacement; and

WHEREAS, the Coalition Members have joined in formation of the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition to coordinate their efforts and enhance their abilities to prepare, adapt and mitigate for the effects of sea-level rise and climate change in their individual communities and throughout the entire Tampa Bay region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BOARDS OF THE COALITION MEMBERS THAT:

SECTION 1. Findings --The findings set forth above are adopted and set forth as the reasons and statement of purpose for the formation of the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition.

SECTION 2. Regional Cooperation – The Coalition Members shall work together to maximize their efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of sea-level rise by: identifying vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change in their communities; identifying common vulnerability assessment methodologies; planning for mitigation and adaptation actions that will enhance the resiliency of their communities; learning from each other and their prior efforts and planning documents; leveraging their resources; and pursuing public private partnerships.

SECTION 3 Regional Resiliency Action Plan -- The Coalition Members shall develop a Regional Resiliency Action Plan which shall include strategies for coordinated regional preparation for and adaption to a rapidly changing global environment based on mapping of projected sea-level rise and resulting amplification of localized impacts of hurricanes and tropical storms, and which shall identify funding strategies at the local, state and federal levels for mitigation and adaptation actions to deal with those impacts.

SECTION 4. Science Based Decisions -- It is essential that the Coalition Members base their strategies and actions on sound science and technical date, and for this reason they shall work together to identify experts for guidance and shall use the regional recognized sea-level rise projections as produced by the Tampa Bay Climate Science Advisory Panel to assess sea-level rise vulnerability, inform planning efforts, and provide guidance on what sea-level rise projections should be incorporated into local planning efforts.

SECTION 5. Legislative Strategy -- The Coalition Members shall develop a legislative strategy which includes a joint position statement recognizing the vulnerabilities of the Tampa Bay region to the impacts of sea-level rise and includes recommendations for the allocation of state and federal resources, which may include designation of the Tampa Bay region as uniquely vulnerable for the purpose of securing enhanced levels of federal participation and funding in regional adaptation and mitigation programs.

SECTION 6. Community Involvement – Recognizing the importance of involvement in these regional, cooperative efforts by all members of the community, the Coalition Members shall engage and involve local businesses, organizations, associations and individuals in developing policies and recommendations which will have the support and commitment of community members and organizations, which is essential for successful implementation.

SECTION 7. Intent -- The Coalition Members each join the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition as an expression of their intent and commitment to work together on a regional level to identify and address the effects of sea-level rise, but by joining this Coalition the Coalition Members do not hereby commit local resources or staffing and acknowledge that the governing body of each Coalition Member retains that power and authority.

SECTION 8. This Memorandum of Understanding shall take effect on _____.

[Signature Blocks to Follow]