



# FLORIDA STATEWIDE OFFICE OF RESILIENCE

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
THE CAPITOL  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0001

RON DESANTIS  
GOVERNOR

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WESLEY R. BROOKS, PH.D.  
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER

December 15, 2022

The Honorable Kathleen Passidomo  
President, Florida Senate  
409 The Capitol  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

The Honorable Paul Renner  
Speaker, Florida House of Representatives  
420 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear President Passidomo and Speaker Renner:

As a supplement to the accompanying report required by Chapter 2022-89, Section 2, Laws of Florida, it is my pleasure to provide the Legislature with an overview of the state's progress towards achieving a more resilient future since my appointment as Chief Resilience Officer nearly 13 months ago.

Under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, and with bipartisan support from the Legislature, Florida has made important strides to advance a robust foundation to support resilience across the state now and in the future. Through the activities of the new Florida Statewide Office of Resilience (Office) and the continued implementation of the Resilient Florida framework established in Chapter 2021-28 and Chapter 2022-89, Laws of Florida, our state will be better prepared than ever before to mitigate and prevent flooding impacts that, to date, have been predominantly explained by shifts in land use patterns, economic development, and population growth, but are expected to become increasingly driven by sea level rise and other climate change influences.

In 2022 the Office was established by chapter 14.2031, Florida Statutes (F.S.), within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Office has focused on continuing to enhance state agency coordination on flood mitigation and resilience activities, particularly among the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Division of Emergency Management (DEM), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The Office is also working to standardize resilience approaches and practice across water management districts, including securing the designation of specific agency points of contact in all five districts for resilience issues. With respect to the Office's responsibility to work with partners to align flood mitigation and resilience priorities, since my appointment, I've traveled to all 67 counties for meaningful engagements with those county governments and 36 municipalities. Finally, the Office has reinforced multiple federal partnership opportunities that strongly align with state resilience priorities, including:

- Protecting military readiness and national security missions in Florida through the promotion of two Sentinel Landscapes designations (Avon Park, Northwest Florida) and the direct support of three active (MacDill AFB, Northwest Florida, South Florida) and three proposed (Central Florida, Northeast Florida, Space Coast) military installation resilience reviews funded in part by the Department of Defense;
- Working to enhance coral reef monitoring, management, and restoration opportunities to improve coastal resilience along the 350-mile long ecosystem through a new Florida's Coral Reef Coordination Team with the DEP, FWC, and federal and county partners; and
- Integrating resilience planning into Everglades restoration efforts, including for the development of the Biscayne Bay and Southeastern Everglades Ecosystem Restoration (BBSEER) project to restore Biscayne Bay and its coastal wetland features.

Important progress has also been made in implementing the Resilient Florida framework, first established in 2021. To address identified flood vulnerabilities, more than \$1.1 billion in state-directed funds are being invested in resilience and adaptation, including through 113 Resilient Florida implementation projects funded in FY21-22 and 76 projects on the 2022-2023 Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan. Additionally, as part of its efforts to launch a world-class repository of climate, land use, and hydrological data and modeling to support flood mitigation and resilience efforts in the state, the Florida Flood Hub for Applied Research and Innovation convened two expert working groups to validate National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) sea level rise projections and United States Geological Survey (USGS) extreme rainfall projections for Florida. Additionally, robust outreach and grant support for local governments through the DEP's Regional Resilience Entity grants and Resilient Florida planning grants is accelerating the development of statutorily compliant comprehensive vulnerability assessments in every region of the state. Those vulnerability assessments, in turn, will inform the DEP's development of the Comprehensive Statewide Flood Vulnerability and Sea Level Rise Data Set and Assessment required under section 383.093(4), F.S.

Apart from the state's demonstrable progress, 2022 also proved significant in highlighting our state's ongoing flood mitigation challenges. In particular, the one-two punch of Hurricanes Ian and Nicole provided devastating examples of storm surge, extreme rainfall, and historic riverine flooding across a large swath of the peninsula that impacted millions of Floridians. Yet, these storms and other inclement weather events this past year also affirmed the importance of natural infrastructure and modern building codes as frontline protections for communities to minimize flood risk, property damage, and tragic loss of life.

I want to emphasize that our efforts are making a real difference in addressing flood impacts in inland and coastal communities across the state, but considerable opportunities remain to further accelerate infrastructure enhancements and adaptations, especially those that would improve floodplain function and stormwater management. I look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature, state agencies, and in partnership with other federal, local, and non-governmental entities to advance critical projects, and to keep our state on course to fulfill the Governor's bold vision for a resilient Florida.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this essential work for the long-term economic and environmental vitality of our great State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wesley R. Brooks', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wesley R. Brooks, Ph.D.  
Chief Resilience Officer