

(Note: A full recording of this EAR Task Force meeting can be requested by contacting the Miami-Dade County Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, Planning Division.)

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The meeting commenced at 1:10 p.m. The following County elected official and County staff were present:

- Mayor Daniella Levine Cava
- Abbie Schwaderer Raurel, Assistant County Attorney
- Lourdes Gomez, Director, Regulatory and Economic Resources (RER)
- Jerry Bell, Assistant Director of Planning (RER)
- Kimberly Brown, Chief, Long Range and Neighborhood Planning (RER)
- Alex Dambach, Planning Development Manager (RER)
- Alex David, Strategic Metro Planner (RER)
- Wilbur Mayorga, Chief, Environmental Monitoring & Restoration Division (DERM)
- Pamela Sweeney, Chief, Water Resources Coordination Division (DERM)

Other agencies represented:

- Isabel Cosio Carballo, South Florida Regional Planning Council

Roll Call

The following Task Force members were in attendance:

- Paul Owens (1000 Friends of Florida)
- Steven Leidner (Sierra Club)
- Martin Motes (Redland Citizens Association)
- Kerri Barsh (Miami-Dade Limestone Products Association)
- Jeffrey Bercow (Builders Association of South Florida)
- Pedro Portela (Latin Builders Association) – left at 3:17 p.m.
- David Tolbert (Dade County Farm Bureau)
- Tom Roth (Urban Land Institute - Southeast Florida/Caribbean)
- Richard Grosso (Friends of the Everglades)
- Curtis Osceola (Miccosukee Tribe of Florida) – left at 2:25 p.m.
- Craig Grossenbacher (Miami Waterkeeper)
- Elizabeth Fata Carpenter (Everglades Law Center)
- Aaron DeMayo (American Institute of Architects - Local Chapter)
- David Rutledge (Laborers' International Union of North America)
- Norie del Valle (United Way Miami)
- Lisa Greer (South Dade Chamber of Commerce)
- Annie Lord (Miami Homes for All) – arrived at 1:25 p.m.

The following Task Force members were absent:

- Lucia Soria (Agricultural Practices Advisory Board)
- William Delgado (Latin American Business Association)
- Ilona Vega (Miami-Dade Beacon Council)
- G. Eric Knowles (Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce)

- Christianah Oyenuga (The Nature Conservancy)
- Danielle Blake (Miami Association of Realtors)
- Jeffrey Mitchell (South Florida AFL-CIO)

Welcome by Mayor Daniella Levine Cava

The Mayor began her remarks by stating that public outreach efforts were to commence in earnest on Tuesday, January 13. As part of this effort, workshops will be held countywide. She encouraged all members to spread the word broadly. The EAR process is intended, in part, to reflect the priorities of all, that will change over time: twenty-five years ago, we were not the county we are today, and twenty-five years from now we will not be the county we are today. The best outcome will be achieved with an inclusive effort with maximum involvement.

Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to be Heard

Kim Brown opened the Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to Be Heard.

1-Valeria Donets of 4600 SW 67th Avenue, representing the Hold the Line Coalition, urged the County to maintain the current boundaries of the West Wellfield Protection Area and avoid any reductions. She emphasized that this area safeguards a critical drinking water source connected to the Biscayne Aquifer, providing resilience against saltwater intrusion, contamination, and climate-related risks. Ms. Donets highlighted the importance of protecting the Bird Drive Basin, a vital wetland that supports aquifer recharge, flood control, and freshwater flow to Biscayne Bay, and is integral to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

She expressed concern that proposed reductions to the West Wellfield Protection Area lack clear technical justification and appear to exclude Bird Drive Basin based on canal placement without sufficient modeling or explanation. Ms. Donets noted that shrinking the protection area could lead to development or contamination, limiting future water supply and ecosystem uses and reducing the County's ability to respond to challenges cost-effectively. She also encouraged alignment with regional restoration investments and hydrologic improvements under CERP.

In addition, Ms. Donets addressed agriculture, noting that agriculture's economic and ecological importance, citing a 2023 study showing the sector supports over 10,000 jobs and generates \$1.5 billion in output. Beyond economic benefits, agriculture provides wildlife habitat, aquifer recharge, and cultural value. However, she warned that pressures on low-productivity agriculture threaten rural life and could lead to undervaluation of these areas when reviewing development applications. Ms. Donets recommended policies to

protect farmland, enforce land-use controls, maintain open space, and support agricultural workforce housing to sustain the sector and empower the community to shape its future.

2-Jocelyn Guilfoyle, of 1850 Old Dixie Highway, Executive Director of the Dade County Farm Bureau, emphasized that designated agricultural areas exist to support production, preserve working lands, protect natural resources, and sustain the farming community's economic viability. She noted that the CDMP recognizes agriculture as a long-term land use, not a temporary placeholder for future development. Guilfoyle warned that increasing development pressures and incremental approvals can create land-use conflicts with active farming, undermining its viability. She also raised concerns about mitigation banks, explaining that their placement or expansion near agricultural areas can permanently remove farmland and alter long-term land use. These decisions, she urged, should be evaluated alongside CDMP agricultural protection policies. Finally, Guilfoyle called on decision-makers to consider cumulative impacts of past and proposed actions and ensure alignment with the CDMP's long-term vision, stressing that responsible planning today is essential to protect culture, environment, and community future.

3-Marcelo Balladares, of 16171 SW 73rd Street spoke on behalf of the Sierra Club, Florida as the workplace organizer. He expressed appreciation for the public workshops and that he will be spreading the word to residents with hopes that this will help bring about a strong CDMP. He encouraged Task Force members to ensure the UDB is maintained and to remind them that Biscayne Bay is a significant environmental and economic benefit to the country and local area. He also encouraged protecting agricultural interests from urban sprawl and unrestrained development.

Approval of December 11, 2025 Meeting Summary

Ms. Brown read the following amendments into the record: 1) deletion of Task Force Member Lisa Greer under the list of task force members in attendance on page 3; 2) removal of the reference to the cost of \$95 Million for BBCW on page 10; and 3) a change on page 13 to show that the Butterfly Report was provided to the BCC and an update to the footnote to reference the correct Butterfly Report legislation. A motion to approve the meeting summary, as amended, was made by Task Force Member Bercow and seconded by Task Force Member Rutledge. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff Coordinator's Report

Staff provided an update on bills being considered in the current legislative session.

Concerns about SB180 are being addressed in the current session with SB840. The new legislation pares it back to June 1, 2026. It adjusts the area to 50 miles with a major disaster declaration and is limited to a set of restrictions that would prohibit one from rebuilding exactly what had been built before the disaster.

SB718: Very broad but short bill that is a pre-emption around key services such as water quality, water control, wetlands. It states that a county may not adopt laws around issues mentioned.

SB 686: Agricultural enclaves. Currently state law establishes that properties that are of a certain size, ownership thresholds, and surrounded on 75% of their boundaries by urban development, can be reviewed for urban development. This new bill loosens existing standards. This may allow for properties outside of the UDB to qualify as agricultural enclaves.

SB 208 and HB399: These involve reviewing the value of urban growth boundaries and consider removing UDBs. At the time of the meeting, the Senate Bill had cleared one committee already and was likely to go for vote soon. The policy also proposes redefining the term “compatibility” for residential uses such that all residential uses are compatible with each other regardless of design.

SB48 and HB313: Propose to mandate local governments to make allowances for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

SB948: Starter Homes Act. Stop governments from requiring minimum lot sizes. Prohibits requiring maximum densities greater than state law.

Upon concluding the staff rundown of pending legislation, Ms. Brown provided an overview of the upcoming EAR workshops. Task Force members are invited and encouraged to attend these workshops. No agendas are provided because the format is open-ended like a charrette. Workshop areas are structured with information about the EAR process and information on the CDMP, much like an open house so that members of the public can walk through freely, interact with staff, and learn as they go. Surveys are available and everyone is asked to submit feedback to the survey, as well.

Presentations

Presentation #1: Aquifer Recharge and Wellfield Protection

Mr. Wilbur Mayorga, Division Chief ERMD, provided a presentation on wellfield protection in the context of the Conservation, Aquifer Recharge and Drainage Element of the CDMP. The

presentation provides an overview of Miami-Dade County’s Wellfield Protection Program, which safeguards the Biscayne Aquifer—the county’s primary drinking water source. It explains the vulnerability of the aquifer due to its shallow, highly permeable nature and the absence of a confining layer, making it susceptible to contamination. To mitigate risks, the county has established wellfield protection zones with land-use restrictions and source prohibitions based on groundwater modeling of travel time and drawdown. These measures are supported by zoning controls, environmental regulations, and a comprehensive groundwater monitoring network, all aligned with Objective CON-3 of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP).

The evaluation of monitoring measures shows that exceedances of water quality standards within wellfield protection areas are rare (about 0.4%), and only four pumpage curtailments occurred in the past decade due to contamination incidents involving PFAS, benzene, bacteria, and sludge leakage. Additional metrics, such as the low density of contaminated sites within protection areas (7%), indicate the program’s effectiveness. The conclusion emphasizes the need for continued rigorous protection and monitoring to maintain safe drinking water supplies for Miami-Dade County.

Task Force Discussion

In response to Mr. Owen’s inquiry about the funding for the water monitoring program, Mr. Mayorga explained that it was comprised of utility fees, and that they provide the funding for the sample.

Mr. Grosso asked if sea level rise is causing any concerns or challenges for maintaining the wellfields. Mr. Mayorga discussed how they partner with DERM and USGS to closely monitor and note any changes to the saltwater intrusion line. Mayor Cava noted that several wellfields have been closed in the past due to saltwater intrusion, and pointed out the benefit of Everglades restoration is bringing in fresh water to push back against saltwater intrusion. Mr. Mayorga provided additional details on the past closure of wells and noted that the County is monitoring closely the production wells as they are noticing decreasing westward movement of the saltwater intrusion line. Mr. Grossenbacher added that additional water is sometimes not required but instead requires better water management and using the existing water in a more natural, resilient way.

In response to Mr. Bercow’s inquiry, Mr. Mayorga discussed the process for contracting the wellfield protection area boundaries, with a study completed and work group convened, and public comments submitted, they are currently in the process of a comprehensive review of the public comments and once completed, they will set up a public workshop to present their response.

Mr. DeMayo asked whether there is an increase in the extent of the contamination when a former contaminated site is developed. Mr. Mayorga clarified the increase was due to a significant uptake

in developments and that their due diligence resulted in the discovery of new contaminated sites, citing the example of a former dry cleaner developed for a different use.

Mr. DeMayo referenced certain rainfall events culminating in extraordinary amounts in a short period of time, and inquired about their impacts based on historical averages. Mr. Mayorga reviewed how contaminants depend on a number of factors such as movement, types of chemicals and are tracked year around through their groundwater monitoring evaluations.

Mr. DeMayo asked if they were making recommendations as to specific drainage on properties, such as deep wells, trenches in the ground or bioswales. Mr. Mayorga indicated they do recommend techniques such as bioswales, but noted that stormwater drainage wells are not allowed west of the isochlor line due to state regulations. They work closely with environmental consultants to find the location, rate of transmission and to actively contain any groundwater plumes.

In response to Mr. DeMayo's inquiry if they are seeing any changes on the monitoring regarding septic tanks and king tides, Mr. Mayorga indicated he would need to look at the data.

Mr. Leidner opined that the Board seemed to be moving forward with the waste incinerator on the Okeechobee site, and asked if there were any anticipated threats, or monitoring at that site. Mayor Cava clarified that no site had been determined yet, and other sites have been evaluated by DERM and are reflected in the report of the sites. Mr. Mayorga added that no impacts are anticipated as that location is outside the Northwest Wellfield protection area.

Mr. Roth identified that the Wellfield Protection Areas (WPAs) are located both inside and outside of the Urban Development Boundary, and asked about the compatibility of development with the WPAs. Ms. Lourdes Gomez, RER Director, explained that as new uses are introduced they are evaluated under the existing standards. Mr. Mayorga stated they also review and monitor old "grandfathered" sites. Mr. Roth inquired if the WPAs are the reason why the UDB appears to 'jog' in certain locations. Ms. Brown responded that Objective CON-3 of the CDMP, to be discussed in the upcoming rock mining presentation, offers a higher level of protection, especially with the Northwest wellfield.

Presentation #2 – Biscayne Bay

This presentation was made by Ms. Pamela Sweeney, Chief of the Water Resources Coordination Division with the Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM). Ms. Sweeney detailed the natural history of Biscayne Bay, its management, and recent events of fish kills and seagrass loss in the Julia Tuttle basin. The 2025 Biscayne Bay report card identified poor water quality areas in the Little River area and at the southern end of the County. Biscayne Bay, a designated aquatic park and conservation area, is losing resilience due to nutrient enrichment and water quality impairments. Key stressors to Biscayne Bay include stormwater runoff, aging wastewater infrastructure, septic systems, fertilizers, and illicit discharges. The County's Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP), a collaborative effort with local and state stakeholders, aims to restore Biscayne Bay's water quality by reducing nutrient loads and restoring seagrass coverage. Over \$52 million across five phases target pollution source identification, septic-to-

sewer conversions, green stormwater technologies, and biological restoration. She also identified the CDMP policies aimed at protecting Biscayne Bay and improving water quality, coastal protection, and sustainable land use.

Task Force Discussion

Mr. Grosso asked whether current stormwater standards-typically keyed to the “100-year” standard are adequate based on what is known today about sea level rise. He asked whether meeting today’s stormwater requirements can be assumed to protect water quality in Biscayne Bay and other surface waters.

Ms. Sweeny responded that the answer is two-part: (1) the standard related to the volume of water reaching the landscape, and (2) how the water is being moved and managed. She stated that in certain basins the standards may be inadequate, and staff is working internally to assess conditions. She added that, even where capture may be adequate, questions remain about where the water goes and the quality of that water, noting that loads reaching groundwater and the Bay may be higher due to changing land uses, new pollutant sources, and/or legacy pollutants. She stated further work is needed to evaluate adequacy countywide and that analysis should be done basin-by-basin, consistent with how the Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP) is being approached.

Mayor Levine Cava stated that she has been very focused on stormwater issues and referenced a flood plan led approximately a year earlier by the County’s Department of Emergency Management that involved coordination with municipalities. She noted the County has purchased equipment to assist with flood mitigation and emphasized that stormwater is highly interconnected across County departments and municipalities, as well as agencies such as the South Florida Water Management District. She stated stormwater management was moved to the Department of Transportation and Public Works because of roadway impacts, and she requested a multi-departmental task force to strengthen coordination. She also highlighted the interplay between stormwater and water and sewer systems-particularly due to stormwater inflow into wastewater systems that can lead to overflows and Bay pollution-and encouraged suggestions on CDMP policies to emphasize stormwater protection and sea level rise considerations.

Ms. Sweeny reminded the group of the County’s impervious ordinance, noting it directly addresses stormwater water-quality standards. She stated the County has examined adequacy across different storm events and acknowledged the interjurisdictional nature of stormwater management. She noted that a key element included in the ordinance-one not preempted by Senate Bill 180-was a recertification standard for storm systems across jurisdictions. She stated the County intends to implement the standard within its own

jurisdiction and work with municipalities to ensure stormwater systems perform as intended and are actively planning toward necessary standards. She also noted the state adopted improved standards that were not preempted, and the County intends to move toward full implementation when able.

Mayor Levine Cava added that the impervious ordinance is intended to ensure water can be absorbed, which supports water quality. She emphasized that the goal should be prevention rather than repair. She invited suggestions from Task Force members and stated she would like to do more, including ensuring that sea level rise is adequately reflected in modeling.

Mr. Grasso asked a follow-up question regarding CDMP Policy LU-8G, asking whether a policy limiting the “shall not be considered” protection to tentatively selected CERP plans is a weakness for protecting areas still under study that could later become part of a tentatively selected plan. He asked whether broadening that policy beyond tentatively selected plans would better protect the success of CERP.

Ms. Sweeny responded that broadening policy protections may be a way to address the issue, noting that in the most recent CERP efforts -the process has been iterative and timelines can create uncertainty (including timing of formal signoff). She stated that while the footprint and features may be understood, engineering and cost estimates continue and procedural timelines can create ambiguity in when a plan is considered final.

Ms. Brown added that because CERP planning is iterative, County policies incorporate tiers. She stated that while the CDMP includes a “shall not be considered” standard for tentatively selected plan boundaries, it also includes a “should be avoided” standard that applies to boundaries still being considered earlier in the process. She stated the nuance reflects that boundaries can change over time.

Mr. Bercow asked about unfiltered stormwater outflows (noting examples in Miami Beach and possibly the City of Miami) that discharge directly into the Bay. He asked what is being done to ensure Bayfront municipalities retrofit nonconforming stormwater outflows, and whether this relates to implementation of the impervious ordinance. Ms. Gomez stated the mechanism is the recertification process and that it will not be instant. She referenced an initial milestone around 2028, when jurisdictions would be expected to have planning documents prepared and submitted for review. She stated some municipalities have capital planning processes for stormwater, but many do not, and the intent is to require engineered stormwater system plans showing projects that conform to current standards. She also noted that when redevelopment occurs and impacts a site, the plan review process can require improvements depending on site conditions. She stated progress may be slow and imperfect but will allow transformation over time. She added that Ms. Marina Blanco was

expected to give a stormwater presentation, which would be rescheduled for the infrastructure topic, and that the presenter could revisit these issues at that time.

Ms. Sweeny added that the RAP process will encourage municipalities and the County to examine basins based on pollutant allocations and identify targeted stormwater system improvements. She noted some outfalls may have older technologies such as baffle boxes and that improvements could include increased maintenance (including street sweeping and baffle box maintenance) and/or additional technology depending on basin needs.

Mr. Motes stated he understood that a significant portion of the North Bay water quality problem relates to water entering Miami-Dade from the north and asked whether regional actions could mitigate that. Ms. Sweeny responded that monitoring data indicate pollutant loading increases as water moves east across the watershed, and that the “bang for your buck” is likely in reducing loading along the west-to-east pathway rather than focusing on inflows entering the county at lower rates. She stated the RAP process will likely focus attention on reducing loads that reach canals and surface waters along that pathway.

Mr. Motes stated that increasing encouragement and promotion of mulch and organic material could buffer nitrogen and phosphorus impacts and help stabilize Biscayne Bay. Ms. Sweeny agreed the issue is important and referenced a study (Indian River Lagoon) suggesting vegetative material can contribute nutrient loading. She stated the fertilizer ordinance includes policies about limiting vegetation cuttings and preventing landscape debris from reaching surface waters, and that implementation depends on enforcement and compliance by contractors, residents, and HOAs.

Mr. Motes asked about agricultural impacts on South Bay and whether the measurable impact of agriculture is small relative to other regions, and how much impact agriculture has compared to what occurs between agricultural lands and South Bay.

Ms. Sweeny stated the RAP process will provide additional information through an integrated groundwater/surface-water model designed to identify pollutant loads and contributing land uses, and she did not want to speculate before results are available. She noted that monthly data suggests more inorganic sources in the south (often associated with fertilizer) and more organic sources (waste/vegetative debris) in the north but stated comparisons to other communities were premature.

Mr. Leidner asked whether trees and tree canopy are considered in the RAP and what role trees can play in filtering water and removing nutrients, including in upland areas. Ms. Sweeny responded that trees can support Bay health by providing green space that captures runoff and allows root systems to take up water. She described best management practices such as “tree wells” or “tree boxes” that can funnel water from roadways and built

environments to trees, reducing stormwater reaching the Bay while expanding canopy. She stated the County has received grant funding to test tree-well performance in urban environments and that data is forthcoming.

Mr. DeMayo asked a follow-up about debris in outfalls and the County's role, stating his understanding that the impervious ordinance is more related to ground materiality and on-site conditions, and that outfalls are primarily municipal infrastructure. He requested clarification regarding municipal management of outfalls and County tools to address maintenance and debris. Ms. Gomez responded that the impervious ordinance includes multiple components. She reiterated the recertification process for municipal stormwater systems and stated that where a drain exists with no nearby redevelopment or roadway reconstruction, it may remain until triggered by capital improvements, which is why recertification is important to ensure systems function to their intended standard and to require planning for upgrades to current standards. She added that the ordinance also includes improved standards for onsite water management and capturing physical pollutants and nutrients. She offered to send materials previously shared during adoption of the ordinance and noted that Ms. Blanco could provide more detailed responses during the infrastructure presentation.

Mr. Grossenbacher referenced work conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District project delivery team during the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project, stating that analysis of long-term monitoring and water quality data found significant nitrogen pollution entering Biscayne National Park. He stated that agricultural nitrogen from the C-102 and C-103 canals was significant and that the project team ranked it statewide as the third-highest nitrogen loading to a coastal estuary, citing documentation within the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project implementation report.

Ms. Barsh asked that Ms. Blanco address CDMP requirements related to public infrastructure design, planning, construction, and sea level rise during the infrastructure discussion.

Presentation #3: Lake Belt / Rock Mining

Ms. Brown provided a presentation on mining and the County's Lake Belt, an area sanctioned by state law and of statewide significance. Touching on limestone issues, CDMP policies and mitigation progress.

Task Force Discussion

Ms. Barsh provided additional information regarding permitting and compatibility, describing tools such as environmental permitting, conservation easements following completion of

mining, the importance of local aggregate supply to housing affordability, and industry practices intended to be good neighbors. She also referenced blasting regulation, stating it is heavily regulated at the state level and that monitoring/data on water quality has been required and provided.

Mr. Motes stated he grew up near active rock mining and did not recall significant disturbance from blasting, suggesting that sensitivities vary.

Ms. Carpenter asked how close complainants typically are when raising blasting concerns.

Ms. Barsh responded that complaints may come from varying distances, including from miles away, and stated that the industry typically prefers at least a 1,000-foot buffer. She described monitoring practices and referenced studies evaluating potential structural impacts, stating those studies did not find blasting to be the cause of observed structural issues, which were attributed to other factors.

Ms. Barsh referenced materials she had submitted and explained that 50% of the entire state's needs for construction or building are serviced from the Lake Belt.

Closing

Ms. Brown stated it would be prudent to begin the agriculture topic at the next meeting to keep it consolidated and noted that schedule flexibility exists to continue topical meetings through March while public outreach continues.

Mr. Bercow stated agreement, noting the agriculture topic would extend past the current meeting timeframe.

Ms. Brown stated the next meeting would be February 13, at 10:00 AM, at the Main Library.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45.