

SECTIONS

[ENVIRONMENT](#)

Florida and Miami-Dade agree to spend \$20 million restoring Biscayne Bay

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Governor Ron DeSantis held a press conference regarding Biscayne Bay resiliency on Monday, December 21. BY THE FLORIDA CHANNEL

Biscayne Bay is getting a new infusion of cash to fund restoration projects for its water, seagrass and coral reef — all of which are suffering under the strain of pollution and climate change.

Gov. Ron DeSantis announced the new \$10 million in funding, which Miami-Dade County will match for a total of \$20 million, at a press conference in Key Biscayne on Monday. The event was billed as a resilience-focused one, but none of the speakers mentioned sea level rise or climate change.

Miami-Dade has already identified \$5 million in restoration projects, and the state agreed to split the costs. The projects include water-quality analyses to identify pollution hot spots the county should tackle first, technology to predict where sewage spills may occur and an outreach program for residents in areas with failing septic tanks to figure out how willing they are to convert to sewer. One of the projects would also pay for \$1.15 million in new sewage lines, which make it more affordable for homeowners to get connected.

“For Miami-Dade to be able to say ‘absolutely, we have skin in the game’ makes it very easy for me to say ‘of course, let’s get this done,’” DeSantis said. “We will continue to work with folks in Miami-Dade County to make that happen.”

Florida’s part of the money comes from an annual set-aside of \$625 million from NOAA that usually goes largely toward Everglades restoration funding.

DeSantis and Noah Valenstein, head of Florida’s Department of Environmental Protection, both stressed the administration’s commitment to Everglades restoration, including highlighting the importance of a new reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee.

“We now get to talk about Everglades restoration projects not in terms of decades or will it happen at all, but we broke ground on the EAA [Everglades Agricultural Area] reservoir in under three years,” Valenstein said.

That contradicts new Senate President Wilton Simpson, a Republican, who recently [called the reservoir a mistake](#) and suggested the state couldn’t afford it.