

**JOINT MEETING
TREASURE COAST AND SOUTH FLORIDA
REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS**

GUEST SPEAKERS BIOS

MARCH 15, 2024



**The Honorable Steve Geller
Chair, SFRPC
Broward County Commissioner, District 5
Former State Senator**



**The Honorable Doug Smith
Chair, TCRPC
Martin County Commissioner, District 2**



**Isabel Cosio Carballo, MPA
Executive Director, SFRPC**



**Thomas J. Lanahan
Executive Director, TCRPC**

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS



THE HONORABLE JOSEPH PEDUZZI **City of West Palm Beach Commissioner, District 4**

Joe Peduzzi was initially sworn into office on April 4, 2019, by the Honorable Sarah Willis, Circuit Judge. He was re-elected in 2021 and again in 2023.

Joe's district, the largest in terms of land mass, includes the beautiful Grassy Waters Everglades Preserve, 23 square miles of pristine wetlands: an ecosystem of native wildlife and the source of fresh water for the City of West Palm Beach and the Towns of Palm Beach and South Palm Beach.

In addition to his commitment to protect our valuable natural resources, Joe has demonstrated a life-long commitment to public service. He cares deeply about the city, and he is moved by the concerns of his constituents. He has pledged to find solutions to violent crime and homelessness. He envisions a city where everyone feels safe in every neighborhood.

Prior to holding elective office, Joe was a former member of the City's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, Vice Chair of the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, and Chair of the Nuisance Abatement Board.

Joe currently serves as the City's representative to the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency, and is the Commission Liaison to the City's Criminal Justice Advisory Committee. As the District 4 Commissioner, he is also an Honorary Member of the Grassy Waters Conservancy.

Professionally, Joe is a personal injury lawyer. His office is located on Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard, where Joe serves as President of his office condominium association. Joe has been awarded the prestigious "AV" Rating from Martindale Hubble, the highest rating possible for legal ability and ethics, and is Life Member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum. In addition to his professional accomplishments, Joe has served on numerous other charitable and civic boards, including Secretary of the Ibis Property Owners Association, President of the North Palm Beach Volunteer Fire Dept., Inc., and as a board member of both an animal rescue and an adolescent substance abuse treatment facility.

Joe is particularly proud of his volunteer work in the field of public safety. For almost 20 years, Joe served the Village of North Palm Beach as a Volunteer Firefighter/EMT, and a Reserve Police Officer. A Life Member of his department, Joe was promoted through the ranks of Lieutenant, Captain and ultimately the top volunteer position of Deputy Fire Chief & Chief of Volunteers, prior to retirement from active duty. Joe has received numerous awards and commendations, including the Larry Joyce Award for Outstanding & Devoted Service, and has received both the Firefighter of the Year and Police Officer of the Month awards.

Joe graduated from Cardinal Newman High School in West Palm Beach, and received his undergraduate degree in Political Science from Loyola University in New Orleans where he was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity. He attended law school at Nova Southeastern University, graduating with a Juris Doctorate where he was a member of the Moot Court

Honor Society. He is a member of the Florida Bar, in good standing. Joe lives in Ibis with his wife, Erin, a lawyer and former teacher, and his daughters Julia, and Alexa.



**THE HONORABLE DOUG SMITH, CHAIR, TCRPC
Martin County Commissioner, District 5**

Commissioner Smith, a resident of Jensen Beach since 1990, was elected in 2000 and is presently serving his sixth term as a Martin County Commissioner. He is a past president of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC); a member of the FAC Legislative Executive Committee; Vice Chair of FAC's Water Policy Committee; Vice Chair of NACo's Environment, Energy & Land Use Policy Steering Committee; a Member of the Board of Trustees for the FL Local Government Investment Trust; Chairman of the Metropolitan Planning Organization; Chairman of The Tourist Development Council; Commissioner Smith is a Member of The Arts Council of Martin County, Past Chairman and present member of the Budget & Personnel Committee of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council; Member of the Florida Regional Councils Association; past board member of the Children's Services Council of Martin County, The Education Foundation of Martin County, The Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation & Environment Studies Council and The Martin County Historical Society. He also serves as the Co-Chair of the SFRPC / TCRPC Florida's Coral Reef Work Group.



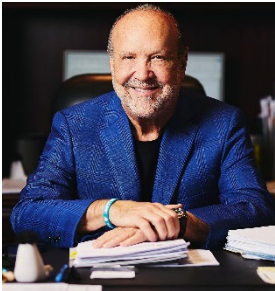
**THE HONORABLE STEVE GELLER, CHAIR, SFRPC
Broward County Commissioner, District 5, and Former State Senator**

Senator Steve Geller served as Broward County Mayor during FY 2021. Elected to District 5 in 2016, he currently represents all or part of Cooper City, Southwest Ranches, Davie, Plantation, Sunrise, and unincorporated areas including part of the Seminole Reservation and all of Broadview Park. Geller serves as Chairman of the Broward County Water Advisory Board, Chair of the South Florida Regional Planning Council, and serves on the Executive Committee of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and on the Broward County Cultural Council. Geller also serves as Chair of the South Florida CEDS Strategy Committee established pursuant to the SFRPC's responsibilities as U.S. EDA's Economic Development District for South Florida. He was recently re-elected Chair by his colleagues on the SFRPC.

Prior to his current service as a Broward County Commissioner, Geller was elected to the Florida Legislature in 1988 at the age of 29. He served in the Florida Legislature for 20 years; eight years in the House of Representatives followed by 11 years in the Florida Senate. Geller was respected by both Political Parties and chaired legislative committees under the leadership of both Democratic and Republican Presiding Officers. Geller chaired the Regulated Industries Committee in the House of Representatives, and the Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Community Affairs Committees in the Senate. Geller served two terms as Chair of the Broward County Legislative Delegation and two terms as Chair of the Hendry County Legislative Delegation. At the time of his retirement from the Florida Senate due to term limits, Senator Geller was the Minority (Democratic) Leader of the Florida Senate. Geller has also served as National President of two legislative organizations: the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) and the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS).

Geller was born in the City of New York, New York in 1958. He has lived in South Florida since 1965. He attended Florida State University for college and law school, where he was a member of AEPi Fraternity. He has lived in South Broward since his graduation from Florida State University College of Law in 1982. He is married to Laurel Geller and they have two children Marc and Ben.

SPECIAL GUESTS



RONALD L. BOOK

Chief Executive Officer of Ronald L. Book, P.A.

Ron Book is the Chief Executive Officer of Ronald L. Book, P.A. Since founding the firm in 1987, Ron has developed a client list that is a “who’s who” of business and industry, local governments, health care and not-for-profit associations. His reputation as a hard worker, dedicated to his client’s causes, has earned him a place in the upper echelon of Tallahassee power. Associates, clients, and lawmakers describe Ron Book and his firm as committed, tenacious, knowledgeable, and credible. It is difficult to narrow Mr. Book’s areas of expertise to a simple few. From sports and economic development to affordable housing to environmental remediation to social services, transportation, growth management, health care, seaports, and aviation — if it is an issue that you have read about, Mr. Book has been at the center of the debate, influencing the decisions of policymakers for the past 4 decades. For more than 35 years, his firm has led the government affairs industry in Florida, specializing in the appropriations process, responsible for literally, billions in grants, programs and earmarks to various projects and causes. An innovator in local government representations, the firm counts dozens of cities, counties, and government entities as clients. The result of his innovation in this practice area is that the firm’s relationships and influence extend well beyond the halls of the state Capitol and deep into City and County governments, north to south and coast to coast. It is why the firm is one of the few that offers first tier state legislative representation along with a robust and extensive local government practice. Ron’s history in the Florida political process began in the 1970’s, when he began working for the Florida Legislature. He later served as Special Counsel and head of Legislative Affairs for Florida Governor Bob Graham and later, as Director of the Administrative and Governmental Law Department for Miami-based Sparber, Shevin, Shapo, Heilbronner & Book, one of Florida’s most influential law firms from 1977 to 1987. His knowledge of Florida politics and its players is rooted in his work in several statewide gubernatorial, cabinet level and referendum campaigns — from “Five for Florida’s Future” in 1980 to the two campaigns that ultimately authorized gaming at Florida’s pari-mutuel facilities in 2004 and 2008. In addition to his work on lobbying matters, Ron also provides general consulting services for many businesses, in both long-established and growing industries, including navigating complex regulatory matters, business development and strategic planning. To provide this guidance, he draws on his vast network of relationships, which range from current and former elected officials at all levels of government as well as business leaders in a wide range of industries. Dedicated to community causes, Ron has served on dozens of charitable boards, including the Mourning Family Foundation, Best Buddies, and Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital, to name a few. He also serves as Chairman of the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust, where he has been a member for more than 28 years, first appointed by Mayor Alex Penelas and subsequently reappointed numerous times. The Trust administers a budget of over \$96 million in funds and oversees Miami-Dade County’s effort to end homelessness in the community. Under his leadership, the Trust has been recognized numerous times as a national best practice model, and was proud to host HUD Secretary Ben Carson,

last year, when the Trust was among the first in the country to announce and end to Veteran’s homelessness in our community.

In addition to his work at the Trust, Ron serves as Chairman of the Board for the Lauren’s Kids Foundation, a not-for-profit entity he founded with his daughter, Florida State Senator Lauren Book. The Lauren’s Kids Foundation is dedicated to ending childhood sexual abuse through education and awareness and helping survivors heal with guidance and support. The foundation educates adults and children about sexual abuse prevention through in-school curricula that is currently offered in over 90,000 classrooms nationwide. They also engage with the community through various awareness campaigns and speaking engagements around the country and the world.

Ron holds a Juris Doctorate degree from Tulane University and a B.A. in Political Science from Florida International University. He is a member in good standing of the Florida Bar. He is a registered lobbyist and a member of the Florida Association of Professional Lobbyists (FAPL). Ron also spent three years at the University of Florida where he was also a member of the Fighting Gator Track Team.



THE HONORABLE HILLARY CASSEL
State Representative, 101st District

State Representative Hillary Cassel is a partner and co-founder of Cassel & Cassel, P.A. She began her legal career practicing as an Assistant State Attorney in Broward County, Florida. While working at the State Attorney's Office, she prosecuted serious felony offenses and tried over forty jury trials to verdict. Upon entering private practice, she worked for approximately four years in the field of first party property insurance defense where she practiced in both State and Federal Court with an emphasis on coverage, liability, and bad faith for various domestic and international insurance carriers. Since 2014, she has exclusively represented residential and commercial policyholders in property claims against their insurance carriers. From 2018 through 2022, she was active in Tallahassee regularly meeting with and educating Florida lawmakers on issues related to policyholder rights and testifying before both chambers of the Florida Legislature.

Elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2022, Hillary currently serves on the House Infrastructure Strategies Committee; Select Committee on Hurricane Resiliency & Recovery; Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee; and Energy, Communications & Cybersecurity Subcommittee. Hillary graduated with honors from Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law School in 2006, where she served as the Chief Advocate of the Moot Court Honor Society. Hillary holds a BS degree from Florida State University. A resident of the lovely City of Dania Beach, in her free time, she enjoys practicing meditation, yoga, reading and, most of all, spending quality time with her husband Michael and their son Shepard.



MARTY CASSINI
Director, Intergovernmental Affairs for Broward County

Marty Cassini is the Director of the Intergovernmental Affairs/Boards Section of County Administration for Broward County. Marty leads the County’s advocacy initiatives in both Tallahassee and Washington, DC. He is also responsible for the general administration of and appointments to more than 70 advisory boards and administers the County’s lobbyist registration.

Marty has helped successfully advocate for the Port Everglades Navigation Improvement Project, the Central and Southern Florida Flood Resiliency Study, and millions of dollars in state and federal appropriations. He has also streamlined the vetting of appointees to advisory boards and paperless lobbyist registration. Marty, wife Gretchen, and son Justin love spending time together supporting the famous Arsenal Football Club in the English Premier League, playing card games, and traveling to unfamiliar places around the world.



KATHY COPELAND
Legislative Affairs & Communications Manager, IRC

Kathy Copeland is relatively new to Indian River County where she serves as the Legislative Affairs and Communications Manager. In this role she works as a liaison with County Departments, jurisdiction/agencies, and community stakeholders to coordinate the County’s legislative agenda which includes protection and restoration of the Indian River Lagoon.

Ms. Copeland represents the County during the legislative process advocating and lobbying on behalf of the County. She also serves as the main point of contact for the media and coordinates strategic communication messaging on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners. Ms. Copeland is a government and corporate communication professional with public policy, legislative and government relations experience in FL/DC/AL. She grew up in Palm Beach Gardens and is a proud University of Alabama Alumni.



DAVID DECH
Executive Director, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

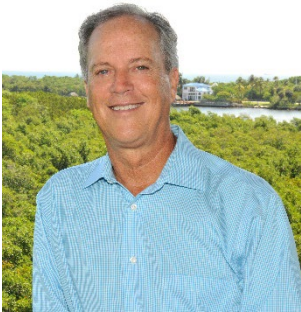
David Dech is the executive director of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority / Tri-Rail. An executive with 28 years in the rail industry, Dech has management experience in both freight and commuter rail service, including commuter rail operations, field operations, system and division level leadership, leading public-private partnerships, and negotiating and managing contracts with host and tenant railroads. Dech was chosen to oversee the SFRTA at a pivotal time for the agency, as it prepared to expand Tri-Rail service into Downtown Miami; he brings experience in designing, constructing and opening rail yards. David Dech is a self-motivated, self-starter with a willingness to listen to the people who perform the work as the key to the success of any project. He operates with the guiding principle that all people in an organization are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.



KASEY DENNY
Director of Legislative Affairs – Palm Beach County

Kasey Denny currently serves as the Director of Legislative Affairs for Palm Beach County where she is responsible for advancing the County’s legislative priorities at the state and federal level. As the County’s lobbyist, she advocates before elected officials and government agencies on issues relating to growth management, affordable housing, local government administration, environmental resources, transportation, and more. She also works with legislative offices and various agencies to secure funding for critical infrastructure projects and community programs in Palm Beach County.

Prior to joining the County in 2022, Kasey worked as a Government Relations Specialist at Lewis, Longman and Walker P.A. and served as an aide to multiple members of the Florida Legislature. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Florida and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and Policy from American University.



QUENTIN “BEAM” FURR
Member, South Florida Regional Planning Council
Broward County Commissioner, District 2

Vice Mayor Beam Furr is the elected representative for Southeast Broward on the Broward County Commission. He has served on the South Florida Regional Planning Council since 2016, most recently as 2nd Vice Chair of the Executive Committee and Co-Chair of the SFRPC / TCRPC Florida’s Coral Reef Work Group.

Vice Mayor Furr serves as the Co-Chair of the Broward Climate Change Task Force and Vice Chair of the Broward County Solid Waste and Recyclables Materials Processing Authority. He also serves as a board member of the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Beam has been a board member of the Broward County Children’s Services Council for six years, and co-chairs the Campaign for Grade Level Reading. He is also the Chair of the Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC).

Vice Mayor Furr was a teacher in the Broward County School system for 25 years. Beam grew up in South Florida and lives in Hollywood with his wife Shelli. He is the proud dad of his daughter Eliza.



STACEY A. GIULIANTI, ESQUIRE
Chief Legal Officer, Florida Peninsula Insurance Company and Edison Insurance Company

Stacey A. Giuliani, Esq. is the Co-Founder and Chief Legal Officer at Florida Peninsula Insurance Company and Edison Insurance Company, where he oversees the Claims, Special Investigations, and Legal Departments. He has been a member of the Florida Bar since 1993. He is the Author of Florida Insurance Law, Thomson West Publishing, 2007-2024. Mr. Giuliani graduated from the University of Miami School of Law *cum laude* in 1993 (staff member, *University of Miami Law Review*).



PAUL HANDERHAN, MBA, CPCU, ARe, AIAF, AIDA
President, Federal Association for Insurance Reform (FAIR)

Paul Handerhan has been working in the first party property insurance market for the last two decades. Mr. Handerhan founded FAIR, the Federal Association for Insurance Reform, and as its President grew the organization into a broadly recognized and creditable national insurance trade association.

Mr. Handerhan has nearly twenty years of governmental affairs experience educating legislators and regulators at the state and national levels of government about first party property insurance. Mr. Handerhan has extensive underwriting and claims experience pertaining to first party property insurance at the state and national levels, with specific domain knowledge of Florida's challenging insurance operating environments. Mr. Henderhan received his bachelor's degree in political science and master's degree in business administration from Florida Atlantic University.

Additionally, Mr. Handerhan has the following industry designations and licensure: Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter, (CPCU), Associates in Reinsurance, (Are), Associates in Insurance Accounting & Finance, (AIAF), Associates in Insurance Data Analytics, (AIDA), 220, Florida Surplus Lines Agency License, 120, Florida General Lines Agency License.



JESS McCARTY
Executive Assistant County Attorney, Miami-Dade County

Jess McCarty is the Executive Assistant County Attorney. The County Attorney, the First Assistant and the Executive Assistant are the management team for the County Attorney's Office.

Jess supervises the development of County Commission legislation and agendas. He also works closely with the Chair and Members of the County Commission, the Mayor, Department Directors and Assistant County Attorneys to develop, prepare and review ordinances and resolutions for the Board's policy consideration.

In addition, Jess has led Miami-Dade County's lobbying efforts in Tallahassee before the Florida Legislature and Governor over the last 12 years and has advocated in Tallahassee on behalf of the County for the last 25 years. Jess advocates for the County's state legislative priorities and package in coordination with the Chair and Members of the County Commission, the Mayor and the Miami-Dade State Legislative Delegation.

Jess also defends the County from the numerous bills and joint resolutions filed each session that would adversely affect the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter, preempt local ordinances and policies, or have a negative fiscal impact on County taxpayers. During the annual 60-day session and committee weeks leading up to it, Jess has developed an expertise in quickly identifying issues that impact Miami-Dade County among the thousands of bills, amendments and line-item appropriations considered each year. Such legislation has included bills that would have adversely impacted the Urban Development Boundary as approved by Miami-Dade County voters, as well as dozens of Miami-Dade County's ordinances, including those related to local preference in contracting, living wage requirements for county contracts, wage theft, wetlands protections, regulating for-hire vehicles, Miami International Airport, and PortMiami.

Jess also advocated on behalf of the County in Tallahassee before the Florida Constitution Revision Commission in both 1997-1998 and 2017-2018. The Constitution Revision Commission convenes once every 20 years under the Florida Constitution to propose changes to the state constitution.

Among his prior work in the County Attorney's Office, Jess served as counsel to a number of county departments. Among them, he served as counsel for PortMiami for more than a decade, where he provided legal advice on seaport matters, including cruise and cargo line transactions, and litigated on behalf of PortMiami in federal and state court.

Jess has earned a preeminent AV peer review rating (5.0 out of 5.0) from Martindale-Hubbell.



MEL E. MONTAGNE, CPCU, ARM, CRIS
President, Fair Insurance Rates in Monroe (FIRM)

Mel Montagne is the President of Fair Insurance Rates in Monroe (FIRM). FIRM is a grassroots organization formed in February 2006 comprised of homeowners and residents who are united to fight against excessive, discriminatory and unaffordable residential, condominium and commercial property insurance rates. He has been involved with FIRM for about 15 years.

Mel is also the Vice President of Sales for Insurance Office of America – Florida Keys. Prior to his current position, he implemented and led the retail insurance strategy for Union Planters Bank. He specializes in condominium associations and all types of commercial accounts.

Born in Cuba, Mel immigrated to the US in the early 60's with his parents and was raised in Miami, Florida. Mel lives in Islamorada with his wife and 1 of 3 daughters. He attended school in Miami as well as The College of Insurance in New York City. Mel has been honored by the legislative and business development committees of the Key Largo Chamber, the affiliate of the year by the Florida Keys Association of Realtors, as well as receiving the Insurance Institute of America's Chartered Property & Casualty Underwriter, Associate in Risk Management and the Construction Risk & Insurance Specialist designations.



THE HONORABLE JARED MOSKOWITZ
Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives, 23rd District of Florida

Moskowitz answered the call of public service and was elected to the Parkland City Commission when he was in law school. Right away, he began working for the people he was elected to serve by putting forward and delivering on pragmatic solutions regarding public safety and environmental protection.

In 2012, Moskowitz was elected to the Florida Legislature, where he worked across party lines to deliver for his constituents, including passing bipartisan measures to make Florida's schools safer, address climate change, support Israel, and implement animal welfare legislation.

When 17 people died in the mass shooting at his alma mater, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, he championed the movement to pass meaningful reforms. As a State Representative, he worked with the families of the victims and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to enact historic gun violence prevention legislation, raising the age to buy guns from 18 to 21 and putting in place “red flag laws” giving law enforcement the power to take away firearms from those too dangerous to responsibly possess them. He also championed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, the most comprehensive gun violence prevention, school safety, and mental health bill ever passed in Florida.

In 2019, Moskowitz was appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis to be Florida’s Director of Emergency Management. As director, he was responsible for disaster recovery efforts throughout the state. Most notably, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Michael, a Category 5 storm. During the height of the COVID pandemic, Moskowitz established testing programs, the vaccine rollout, and administered the distribution of millions of personal protective equipment to communities and hospitals across the state.

Moskowitz then served as a Broward County Commissioner. In this position, he worked to improve affordable housing, invest in critical infrastructure, expand public transportation, enhance public safety, and address quality-of-life issues on behalf of his constituents.

Currently, Moskowitz serves in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Florida’s 23rd congressional district. He is seated on both the House Oversight and Accountability Committee as well as the House Foreign Affairs Committee.



VALERIE NEILSON
Executive Director, Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency

Valerie Neilson is an urban planning professional passionate about multimodal transportation and creating healthy, sustainable, and economically vibrant communities. Valerie serves as the Executive Director at the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (TPA), leading the agency’s efforts to plan, prioritize, and fund transportation projects that advance safe, efficient, and connected facilities for users of all ages and abilities in Palm Beach County. Prior to her current role, Valerie served as the TPA’s Deputy Director of Multimodal Development. Valerie is a Leadership Palm Beach County Class of 2016 Alumni and has served in various leadership roles, including Chair of the City of Greenacres Planning Commission and Vice-Chair of the Miami-Dade Health & Built Environment Committee. Prior to the TPA, Valerie worked on environmental planning and active transportation initiatives.

Valerie is fluent in English/Spanish and has over 15 years of experience in strategic planning and project management. Valerie holds a Bachelor degree in Environmental Studies and a Master degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Florida State University.



LISA TENNYSON
Legislative Affairs Director, Monroe County

Monroe County Legislative Affairs Director Lisa Tennyson has developed and directed Monroe County’s state and federal legislative activities since 2012. Before that Tennyson served as the County’s Affordable Housing Director for 5 years. She works closely with commissioners, county staff, congressional and state delegation members, and contracted lobbyists to secure appropriations and legislation that advance local priorities. She advises on the long-term resilience and affordability of the Keys, water quality initiatives, affordable housing, insurance, flood mitigation planning, long-term planning for road elevation, and infrastructure hardening.

On the state level, Tennyson focuses on water quality and marine protection, affordable insurance and housing, Everglades restoration, land acquisition for conservation, and appropriations. On the federal level, she works on protecting the National Flood Insurance Program, coral reef and endangered species protections, disaster recovery funding, and federal funding critical to Monroe County such as PILT, Army Corp and FKWQIP funding. More recently this also includes local community appropriations.

Significant accomplishments include the passage of the Florida Keys Stewardship Act, federal authorization of the Florida Keys Coastal Resilience Project, affordable housing and insurance legislation, state, and federal wastewater funding, RESTORE Act, CARES Act, and American Rescue Plan funding and implementation, and appropriations for county infrastructure and hurricane recovery funding.

She has a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the State University of New York at Albany, serves as a director on the statewide RESTORE Act Gulf Consortium, is a member of NACO’s Gulf Coast Counties and Parishes and Public Lands committees, and is active with the Florida Association of Counties.
