

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

**FEBRUARY 28, 2025**

The South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils held a Joint Meeting on February 28, 2025, at the Broward County Metropolitan Organization (MPO), 100 West Cypress Creek Road, Suite 650, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33309. The recorded meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/4mAN963Pp0g>.

**Welcome and Call to Order – The Honorable Michelle Lincoln, Chair, SFRPC**

Chair Lincoln called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m., welcomed everyone, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Lincoln thanked Greg Stuart, Executive Director of the Broward MPO, for hosting today’s meeting and his excellent staff for their support. In Mr. Stuart’s absence, Mr. Bryan Caletka, MPO Director of Transportation, welcomed the Councils and guests to the MPO.

**Roll Call**

The following members and alternates were present from the **Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council**:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Indian River County:      | Councilmember Ed Dodd<br>Councilmember John Carroll, Alternate   |
| Martin County:            | Commissioner J. Blake Capps<br>Vice Mayor Vinny Barile, Town of Sewall’s Point   |
| St. Lucie County:         | Commissioner Larry Leet  |
| Palm Beach County:        | Vide Mayor Joaquin Almazan<br>Deputy Mayor Yvette Drucker, City of Boca Raton<br>Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy, Town of Ocean Ridge |
| Gubernatorial Appointees: | Douglas Bournique, Indian River County<br>Michael Davis, Palm Beach County   |
| Ex-Officio:               | Kent Walia, FDOT<br>Loraine Cargill, SFRTA   |
| Council Staff:            | Thomas Lanahan, Executive Director   |

Kim DeLaney  
Liz Gulick  
Stephanie Heidt  
Dana Little  
Jessica Seymour

Council Attorney: Keith Davis

The following members were present from the **South Florida Regional Planning Council**:

Broward County: Mayor Beam Furr, Broward County  
Commissioner Senator Steve Geller, Broward County  
Commissioner Michael Udine, Broward County  
Commissioner Maria Rodriguez, City of Pembroke Pines

Miami-Dade County: Councilmember Frank Caplan, Village of Key Biscayne  
Commissioner René García, Miami-Dade County

Monroe County: Mayor Pro Tem Michelle Lincoln, Monroe County  
Commissioner Craig Cates, Monroe County (virtual)

Ex-Officio: Megan Rutter for Sirena Davila, FDEP  
Dat Huynh, FDOT (virtual)  
Victoria Peters, FDOT (virtual)  
Lorraine Cargill, SFRTA  
Armando Vilaboy, SFWMD

Council staff: Isabel Cosio Carballo, Executive Director  
Randy Deshazo, Deputy Director  
Eralda Agolli  
Hailey Lazzaroni  
Rebecca Landesman  
Kathe Lerch  
Marion Knowles (virtual)

Council Attorney: Sam Goren

Chair Lincoln recognized the following in attendance:

- Staff member Kiara Colman for House Representative Chip LaMarca, District 100.
- Commissioner Maria Rodriguez, City of Pembroke Pines (new SFRPC Council Member)
- Verdenia Baker, Palm Beach County Administrator
- Monica Cepero, Broward County Administrator
- Shawn Ackerson, Miami-Dade Deputy Director and Chief of Transit Operations
- Councilmember Jim Allbritton, Town of Southwest Ranches, Broward County

Broward County Mayor Beam Furr welcomed everyone to Broward County and noted that both Councils have been organizing the joint meetings for the past 7-8 years, which have proven to be successful.

**Chairs' Comments – The Honorable Michelle Lincoln, Chair, SFRPC, and the Honorable Ed Dodd, Acting Chair, and Secretary-Treasurer, TCRPC**

TCRPC Acting Chair Dodd noted that the TCRPC members are excited to be here today and that these meetings are an opportunity to discuss common problems and share information. He mentioned that he is from the City of Sebastian, a fishing village, and the TCRPC helps maintain the city's character. Chair Lincoln from the SFRPC welcomed everyone and noted that these Joint Meetings make our entire area stronger.

**Approval of Joint Council Meeting Minutes (March 15, 2024)**

*Council Action: Commissioner Geller from Broward County moved approval of the March 15, 2024, Joint Council meeting minutes. Commissioner Caplan from Miami-Dade County seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.*

**SFRTA/Tri-Rail Update and Future Plans: David Dech, Executive Director, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority**

The presentation is available on the SFRPC's and TCRPC's Websites:

<https://sfregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/1.-10.30-AM-David-Dech-SFRTA-Tri-Rail-Update.pdf>

[https://files.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/1\\_David%20Dech%20SFRTA%20Tri-Rail%20Update.pdf](https://files.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/1_David%20Dech%20SFRTA%20Tri-Rail%20Update.pdf)

Mayor Furr welcomed Executive Director David Dech from the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA)/Tri-Rail. Mr. Dech updated Council members and guests on SFRTA activities and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Mr. Dech provided a brief history of the SFRTA, noting that the FDOT purchased the South Florida Rail Corridor from CSX Transportation in 1988 and began Tri-Rail service in 1989. He added that funding is provided through state, county, and federal sources. The system currently operates 19 stations, with 54 weekday trains and 30 weekend trains. Mr. Dech stated that Tri-Rail's future may be jeopardized due to funding uncertainty at this time. Tri-Rail is asking Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties for a combined \$30 million yearly, or it could mean service cuts to the commuter service that hundreds of thousands of people ride each month. He noted the funding shortfall comes from the soon-to-expire COVID-19 relief dollars, and the FDOT is looking to stop funding Tri-Rail altogether. Mr. Dech noted that the operating agreement with the FDOT expires in less than two years.

He noted that the SFRTA will meet sometime in March with the FDOT, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties to discuss potential funding options. Palm Beach County Administrator Verdenia Baker expressed concerns about the cost, as well as Broward and Miami-Dade counties. It was noted that transit service is critical and essential, and a benefit to the area and region.

Councilmember Davis, Gubernatorial Appointee from Palm Beach County, noted that he is excited about the Vanderbilt building, a graduate campus in Downtown West Palm Beach. He suggested reaching out to them. Mr. Dech agreed that it would be a great opportunity.

Mayor Furr noted that mass transportation is subsidized. This will be a heavy lift for the counties and suggests sending a letter to the FDOT Secretary Perdue.

Broward County Administrator Monica Cepero stated that a letter to Secretary Perdue could help express the counties' interest in continuing collaborative discussions and remain engaged in any state budget decisions that may affect them. Mr. Dech noted a meeting scheduled for March with the FDOT Secretary. Ms. Baker noted that Palm Beach County will continue to work with Mr. Dech and that he has done a tremendous job. Miami-Dade County Deputy Director and Chief of Transit Operations Shawn Ackerson expressed support for sending a letter urging the state to continue funding or different levels of funding to make sure the SFRTA can continue to operate a valuable service for the Tri-county area.

Deputy Director Drucker, City of Boca Raton, stated that she is a big proponent of Tri-Rail, and as policymakers, it is our job as a body and elected officials to educate our legislators in Tallahassee.

Broward County Commissioner Geller is concerned with the funding issues and noted that the SFRPC and TCRPC have been active in working towards transit-oriented development.

Commissioner Leet, St. Lucie County, asked if the Tri-Rail was coming to his county. He asked if there was any communication between Tri-Rail and Brightline. Mr. Dech noted that Tri-Rail and Brightline are two very different businesses. Tri-Rail caters to a very different clientele, and Brightline is not interested in commuter rail, but they are interested in having commuter rail on the FEC corridor. He noted that commuter rail is encouraged, but rail is expensive.

Mayor Furr made a motion to send a letter to Secretary Perdue, FDOT, and ask for flexibility in continued discussions. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Florida's Coral Reef Update**

The presentation is available on the SFRPC's and TCRPC's Websites:

[https://sfregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2.-11-AM-Mollie-Cordo-and-Maurizio-Martinelli\\_Coral-Reef-Update-to-RPCs.pdf](https://sfregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2.-11-AM-Mollie-Cordo-and-Maurizio-Martinelli_Coral-Reef-Update-to-RPCs.pdf)

[https://files.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/2\\_Mollie%20Cordo%20and%20Maurizio%20Martinelli\\_Coral%20Reef-Update%20to%20RPCs.pdf](https://files.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/2_Mollie%20Cordo%20and%20Maurizio%20Martinelli_Coral%20Reef-Update%20to%20RPCs.pdf)

Presentations by Mollie Cordo, Southeast Regional Administrator, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and Maurizio Martinelli, Administrator, Coral Protection and Restoration Program, FDEP.

They gave a brief overview and explained that the Florida Coral Reef runs from Martin to Monroe counties and is essential to shoreline protection, fisheries habitat, and tourism.

Coral Reef Environmental and Biological Stressors: Sponge die-off, harmful algal blooms, seagrass die-off, drought and higher salinity, warm water mass bleaching, and stony coral tissue loss disease.

In July 2024, the Kristin Jacobs Coral Aquatic Preserve was established, subject to Florida Administrative Code Chapter 18-20. Along with state and federal partners, the FDEP's Coral Reef Conservation Program is responsible for managing the Kristin Jacobs Coral Aquatic Preserve by balancing conservation with commercial and recreational uses. They thanked everyone here who supported this effort, noting the TCRPC and SFRPC involvement and advocacy over many years.

In 2023, Executive Order 23-06 established the Florida Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery (FCR3) Initiative to focus the state's coral management efforts on 3 priorities: resilience, ecosystem restoration, and water quality. Funding for the FCR3 Initiative will increase coral propagation infrastructure and capacity across Florida's Coral Reef to support the restoration of hardy populations of native corals and other keystone species. The FCR3 Initiative will also prioritize the design and location of restoration efforts with a goal of significantly enhancing flood protection and strengthening southeast Florida's coastal economies.

#### Strategic Priority Areas:

- Funding Administration
- Holistic Management of Florida's Coral Reef
- Protect and Restore Florida's Coral Reef
- Coordination and Information Sharing

Councilmember Bournique, Gubernatorial Appointee from Indian River County, has concerns about the cruise ships that are legally allowed to dump sewage into the sea beyond 3.5 miles offshore, which generates bilge water, sewage, etc., microplastics, a type of marine debris that is less than five millimeters in length, and he encouraged banning certain sunscreens. Chair Lincoln noted there is a ban on certain sunscreens in Key West. Ms. Cordo noted that DEP is actively working on this issue and will be addressed

in the management plan. She also stated that the U.S. Coast Guard is currently working on Vessel Incident Discharge. On December 4, 2018, the President signed into law the "[Vessel Incidental Discharge Act](#)" (VIDA), which restructures the way the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) regulate incidental discharges, primarily from commercial vessels, into waters of the United States and the contiguous zone.

Mrs. Cosio Carballo stated that a resolution (Resolution SFTC 25-01) is being developed to support coral funding. The resolution addresses thanking the State of Florida, the Governor, and the Legislature for their support, but also ties in some federal initiatives that are underway. The resolution will be brought back to the boards for comment and approval.

*A motion and a second were made to draft a resolution, and the motion was approved unanimously.*

### **2025 State of Florida Legislative Session Pre-View – Ronald L. Book, President & CEO**

Mr. Ron Book, President & Chief Executive Officer of Ronald L. Book, P.A. CEO, updated the Council members on upcoming legislative issues.

- State Budget Expectations and Preview
- Florida State Department of Governmental Efficiency (DOGE) Task Force
- DEP Resilient Grants Opportunity
- Sovereign Immunity
- Condominium Regulation
- "Live Local" Part 3
- Property Taxes

Commissioner Geller asked Mr. Book three questions.

1. Repeal Property, Not Replace
2. Property and Casualty
3. Timing on Tri-Rail

**Repeal Property, Not Replace:** Mr. Book responded that when it comes to repeal or replace, lawmakers are not necessarily aligned with the Governor's stance on repealing without replacing. He believes the Governor has performed very well over six years and admires his ability to drive a dialogue on any topic. Mr. Book mentioned that he has had about a dozen conversations with lawmakers, and no one discussed repealing without a replacement; they are unsure where that would come from. Even if the Legislature puts a joint resolution on the ballot, it remains subject to the single-subject rule. He is unsure whether, under this rule, discussing taxes alone would avoid the 75-word limitation issue, and he thinks it might result in two valid initiatives—one where repeal passes at 60% and another where the replacement fails at 58.9%.

**Property and Casualty:** Any reasonable person would be concerned about money being transported or exported outside the state, which is essentially what is being discussed. This results in shareholders being enriched at the expense of Floridians. He stated that he is unsure whether there is enough willingness to address the issue this year and suggested that, without the pressure of an upcoming election or significant public concern, it may be difficult to achieve the response being sought.

**SFRTA / Tri-Rail:** Mr. Book stated that he did not have a good answer.

Commissioner Cassidy, Town of Ocean Ridge, asked if there is any discussion about whether one size does not fit all, specifically Ocean Ridge (less than 2000 people), with an \$11 million budget. She noted the Town does not have any businesses, so if property taxes are eliminated, the Town goes out of business. With sovereign immunity, likewise, a million, \$3million cap. Has there been discussion about scaling that as a community?

Mr. Book used the Village of Biscayne Park in Miami-Dade County as an example—a complete bedroom community with no commercial or retail development. He said he has not heard of any discussions regarding this issue. He urged that when bills or joint resolutions begin to be considered, it is important to actively advocate through the Florida League of Cities to make sure your concerns are heard in committee. Most importantly, he stated that there is no substitute for personally representing yourself and your community, speaking directly to the committee about your concerns. He noted that while committees often focus on impact fees, in a community with no development impacts, such fees would be inappropriate.

The second part of your question was about sovereign immunity. The answer is: no, yes, no. It is not exactly as you described, but there has been some discussion regarding physically constrained cities and fiscally constrained counties. My guess is that your city would not qualify as fiscally constrained, since, being from South Florida and the Treasure Coast, it has sufficient financial resources. For context, even the City of Miami was once in a state of emergency. The definitions of fiscally constrained cities should have been revisited a decade ago, but that never happened. Cities like yours rarely face financial crises, so the policy debate on this topic generally does not occur because these conditions are more typical in other regions.

**Biscayne Bay Reasonable Assurance Plan: A Plan to Restore the Health and Resilience of Biscayne Bay**

The presentation is available on the SFRPC's and TCRPC's Websites:

<https://sfregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/4.-1-PM-Pamela-Sweeney-Biscayne-Bay-RAR.pdf>

[https://www.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/4\\_Pamela%20Sweeney%20Biscayne%20Bay%20RAR.pdf](https://www.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/4_Pamela%20Sweeney%20Biscayne%20Bay%20RAR.pdf)

Ms. Pamela Sweeney, Senior Water Scientist, Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Biscayne Bay Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP): A Plan to Restore the Health and Resilience of Biscayne Bay.

Biscayne Bay is the largest estuary in Florida and home to mangrove-lined islands, lush seagrass beds, fish, sponges, corals, and an array of endangered species. Protecting the Bay is important to Florida both environmentally and economically by addressing pollutants that threaten the ability of the bay to continue providing environmental, economic, and socio-cultural value to residents and visitors. The Biscayne Bay Commission was created to monitor the natural resources within Biscayne Bay.

Miami-Dade County Commissioners approved the development of a Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP) for the Biscayne Bay watershed. A RAP is a restoration plan that is developed and implemented to improve the water quality of a water body, including those waterbodies identified as impaired (or trending to be) by the FDEP. RAPs are similar to Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) in that they both require the same level of technical analysis and assurances that the impaired waterbody will attain applicable water quality standards. The difference between the two plan types is that BMAPs implement Total Maximum Daily Loads and are developed by FDEP. Conversely, RAPs are developed locally by stakeholders. Once adopted by the State, both BMAPs and RAPs become subject to agency enforcement action. Benefits of a RAP – Stakeholder-driven, enhances public relations, faster path to restoration, and funding opportunities.

Biscayne Bay's water quality will require significant reductions in the levels of pollutants within its watershed. In addition, significant improvements must be made to contributing waters to the Bay and canals through outfalls and sheet flow.

Recommended actions include:

- Establish pollutant load reduction goals
- Leverage the County's role as a local authority
- Increase monitoring to measure progress against those goals
- Implementation of pollution reduction activities and projects

Commissioner Leet asked if she was familiar with Sedron Corporation. Sedron processes human waste through its system to produce three products: purified water, a high-concentration byproduct, and dehydrated human waste that burns hotter and cleaner than natural gas. Their presentation indicated that much of South Florida (including Palm Beach County and some northern counties like Martin County and St. Lucie County) is currently sending collected human waste north of Lake Okeechobee. She noted that, instead of simply spending millions on restoration projects and storage lands, a more practical

solution would be to address the source directly. This approach could provide a long-term fix rather than just applying a temporary band-aid.

Ms. Sweeney noted she is familiar with the phenomenon and that it could affect the Florida peninsula. It has been discussed with the technical team and experts. The RAP also identifies the land uses outside your area that may impact your watershed. This will be considered and weighed alongside other contributions in the analysis.

Mayor Beam Furr asked about the Right to Clean Water Amendment. Ms. Sweeney responded that this reflects Miami-Dade County's commitment, and its partners', to ensure people have less concern in accessing their Bay, addressing their issues that have been seen in recent years. Mayor Furr noted it passed in Orange County and Titusville, and asked whether areas like Palm Beach, where sludge spreading occurs, are being considered as focal points for addressing problems. Ms. Sweeney replied that these areas have not been a specific focal point, but they are part of the broader assessment of inputs to the watershed. She noted studies on the time it may take for pollutants to reach the bay and emphasized the importance of quantifying both the load and its source. She added that, so far, impacts are most apparent from septic systems in parts of the county where they are concentrated, and this is being addressed through the RAP.

Chair Lincoln left the meeting early and turned the meeting over to Immediate Past Chair Steve Geller.

### **Southeast Florida Restoration & Flooding Resilience Studies, Projects, and Timelines**

PowerPoint Presentation from John Mitnik, P.E., Assistant Executive Director and Chief District Engineer, South Florida Water Management District, Ana Carolina Coelho Maran, P.E., Ph.D., District Resiliency Officer, South Florida Water Management District, and Eva B. Velez, P.E., Chief, Ecosystem Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

The presentation is available on the SFRPC's and TCRPC's Websites:

<https://sfregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/5.-1.30-PM-Maran-Mitnik-Restoration-Flooding-Resilience.pdf>

[https://files.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/5\\_Maran-Mitnik%20Restoration-Flooding-Resilience.pdf](https://files.tcrpc.org/council/2025%20COUNCIL%20MEETINGS/5_Maran-Mitnik%20Restoration-Flooding-Resilience.pdf)

*Topics of discussion:*

- Integrating Local, Regional, Natural, Inland Drainage, and Coastal Flood Resiliency Strategies
- Need both structural measures and non-structural measures
- Showed examples of flood mitigation solutions
- Flood Protection Level of Service Program
- C&SF Flood Resiliency Study
- Wet & King Tide Season Preparation
- Resiliency Coordination Forum
- Resiliency Projects Implementation in Progress
- Keeping the Water and Improving the Flow
- Everglades Restoration
- C-44 Reservoir and STA – Protecting St. Lucie Estuary
- Storage Progress – West of Lake Okeechobee
- Restoring Fresh Water Flow to Biscayne Bay
- Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Tentative Budget = \$1.63 Billion
- East + West Reservoirs completed
- All IRL Reservoirs under construction
- Clean Water Entering the Everglades + New 6,000-acre STA
- Northern + Southern Storage Underway
- Tamiami Trail Raised and Ready
- Restored Picayune Stand
- Completed Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands

Commissioner Geller asked if the C51 Reservoir is managed by a different group.

John Mitnik noted that the C51 reservoir is not part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). It is managed by a private entity that developed the reservoir and consists of two phases:

- Phase 1: Storage has been sold to some utilities along the lower East Coast.
- Phase 2: Currently under construction, this phase is expected to provide water for regional supply and restoration purposes.

Senator Geller noted that the schedule, previously discussed for the Broward portion, targeting the Water Resources Development Act of 2026 (WRDA 2026), has always been extremely aggressive. If all milestones are met on time, submission could occur by early 2026, aligning with the development of the WRDA bill and allowing for meaningful discussion. Given this, he asked whether the schedule is still on track.

John Mitnik noted that the partnership between SFWMD and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has influenced how projects are delivered nationwide. The Broward County portion, as discussed by Dr. Maran, is under Section 203 of federal law, which allows a nonfederal sponsor, in this case, the SFWMD, to deliver the civil works projects. This is the third time the SFWMD has used this mechanism, having

successfully completed the first two projects authorized by Congress. While the schedule is aggressive, the team is confident in meeting the milestones and delivering the third project.

Senator Geller noted that Section 203 of the Study and related sections (Section 216) under study would involve installing large pumps and creating centralized control areas, but may not address secondary canals or berm impacts. He expressed concern that without higher berms or seawalls, larger control areas could cause inland flooding if water overtops canal banks and asked how this risk is being addressed.

Mr. Mitnik provided an overview of flood control operations in Broward County, noting that certain areas are classified as unmanaged due to the location of control structures farther inland and therefore fall outside the District's operational authority. While the SFWMD may review flooding reports from these areas during rainfall events, operational controls are limited to managed areas located primarily to the west. The Board was briefed on ongoing and planned projects, including studies evaluating alternative system improvements and the development of a pump station to augment gravity flows and prevent water recirculation that could contribute to downstream flooding. Ongoing challenges related to sea level rise and increasing water levels were acknowledged, and the SFWMD will continue to evaluate and implement strategies to address these conditions.

Mayor Furr asked about Broward's new resiliency plan.

Mr. Mitnik replied that they are reviewing the proposals in the resiliency plan and comparing them with the Section 203 initiatives. He noted the need to ensure that all efforts are coordinated and implemented together.

Mr. Mitnik was grateful for the Legislature's support and funding, as well as for the partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their contributions through the Section 216 Study and other restoration efforts. He noted that the SFWMD received \$150 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program to implement three projects on the S27, S28, and S29 structures, including rehabilitation work. He added that SFWMD is pursuing multiple funding opportunities to support needed infrastructure improvements in South Florida. Mr. Mitnik noted that the SFWMD is looking into the future as they develop projects with cost estimates, and timing of funds availability to support cash flow. The focus is on proper sequencing and timing to ensure revenue is received when needed to move projects into construction.

Councilmember Davis asked about the status of the operations and maintenance program for repairing and replacing infrastructure. Mr. Mitnik noted that the program is accelerating. Last year, approximately \$156 million was allocated for repairs, and the current fiscal year's budget is \$186 million. The efforts are being coordinated with resiliency initiatives, focusing on aging infrastructure such as the S27, S28, and S29 structures. These projects combine maintenance and resiliency improvements, including new structures and pump stations, to ensure long-term functionality and address challenges for decades to come.

There were discussions and explanations regarding the Section 203 Study and the WRDA 2026.

Ms. Velez explained that once the Section 203 Study, prepared by a nonfederal sponsor like South Florida, is submitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Congress can authorize it for construction, turning it into a federal project, but funding must still be appropriated. After authorization, the ACOE and her team would seek funding to complete design work before contracting and construction. Commissioner Geller asked if this would be included in WRDA 2026. Ms. Velez clarified that WRDA 2026 would provide congressional authority to move the project forward, but not funding. Mr. Mitnik added that under the Design Agreement, the nonfederal sponsor, in the absence of appropriations from Congress, can advance some design work using our own funds or in partnership with counties to expedite progress. There was concern about the impact on water projects with potential federal budget cuts. Ms. Velez explained that the ACOE is project-funded, meaning they only work on projects that Congress has specifically appropriated funds for. Their current focus is on those authorized projects.

Senator Geller introduced the newest member of the SFRPC, Commissioner Maria Rodriguez, from the City of Pembroke Pines.

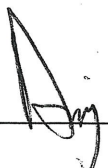

Mrs. Cosio Carballo thanked the team and asked about SB7002. Mr. Mitnik responded that they are monitoring and analyzing the bill and working with the legislature to address their concerns.

#### Public / Council Member Comments

None.

#### Adjournment

There being no further business, Acting Chair Senator Geller adjourned the Joint Meeting of the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils at 2:35 p.m. This signature is to attest that the undersigned are the Secretaries or designated nominees of the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, and that the information provided is the true and correct Minutes of the February 28, 2025, meeting.



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Maria Rodriguez  
SFRPC Secretary  
City of Pembroke Pines Commissioner



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J. Blake Capps  
TCRPC Secretary/Treasurer  
Martin County Commissioner