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SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
SOUTH FLORIDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT ESTABLISHED 1994



BLUE TECH JOBS:
POLICY, INVESTMENT, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

A JOINT CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL AND THE TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2026
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

BROWARD CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
MARY N. PORTER RIVERVIEW BALLROOM
201 SW 5TH AVENUE, FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33312

CONFERENCE GOALS:

- Demonstrate to local officials and other regional stakeholders the potential for and the challenges faced by Blue Tech
- Explore different ways of supporting Blue Tech through land use and regulation, workforce systems, commercialization, demonstration projects, and innovative partnerships
- Spark a broader conversation about the Blue Tech economy and support its expansion in Southeast Florida through the identification of implementable next steps

SCAN FOR CONFERENCE INFORMATION

APPROVED FOR 4.5 HOURS OF AICP CERTIFICATION CREDITS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
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QUESTIONS?

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AGENDA

8:30 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.	**REGISTRATION AND NETWORKING**
9:00 A.M. – 9:15 A.M.	**WELCOME AND CONFERENCE FRAMING**

The Honorable Senator René García, Chair, SFRPC; Miami-Dade County Commissioner, District 13

The Honorable Maria Marino, Chair, TCRPC; Palm Beach County Commissioner, District 1

The Honorable Senator Steve Geller, SFRPC Council Member and Chair, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee; Broward County Commissioner, District 5

9:15 A.M. – 9:30 A.M.	**BLUE TECH IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW**

Randy Deshazo, MA, MUP, Deputy Director and Director of Economic Development and Research, South Florida Regional Planning Council

9:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.	**PANEL 1: WHAT BLUE TECH COMPANIES DO IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA**

Moderator: Bob Swindell, President and CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance; Chairman, Marine Research Hub Board

Nick Bourdon, Co-Founder, Reef Arches

Tom Potts, Program Director, DSF Science, DEEP

Bonnie Schneider, CEO & Co-Founder, SkyWind Solutions

Alexander "Sandy" Spaulding, Senior Vice President, Blue Ops, Inc.

10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.	**PANEL 2: WORKFORCE, CREDENTIALS, AND EMPLOYER COMMITMENTS**

Moderator: Robert P. Smith, PhD, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Nova Southeastern University

Jim Allen, Chief Executive Officer, Chapman School of Seamanship

Terri-Ann Brown, Senior Director, Miami Tech Works

Colin Polsky, PhD, Associate Vice President, Broward Campuses; Professor of Geosciences, Florida Atlantic University

Brittany Snyder, DM, Executive Vice President & CFO, The College of the Florida Keys

Glenn A. Wiltshire, Deputy Director, Port Everglades

11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. LUNCH, KEYNOTE SPEAKER, AND SPECIAL PRESENTATION

11:30 A.M. – 11:55 A.M.	Pick up lunch at the buffet
11:55 A.M. – 12:20 P.M.	**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**: The Honorable Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
12:25 P.M. – 12:55 P.M.	**SPECIAL PRESENTATION: "INTERSECTION OF THE BLUE TECH ECONOMY & DEFENSE PRIORITIES IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA"** Presented by Captain Rick Miller, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Executive Director, South Florida Defense Alliance

1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. PANEL 3: REGULATORY PATHWAYS, PERMITTING, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOOLS

Moderator: James Kohnstamm, CEcD, Director of Economic Development, Miami-Dade County

The Honorable Chip LaMarca, State Representative, 100th District

Philip R. McChesney, MSW, Director and Deputy Chief Innovation Officer, Broward County

Loren Parra, MBA, Director and Chief Resilience Officer, Department of Environmental Resources Management, Miami-Dade County

Chris Roschek, PE, Chief Resiliency Officer, City of Hollywood

2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. PANEL 4: RESEARCH, COMMERCIALIZATION, AND CAPITAL

Moderator: Katherine O'Fallon, Executive Director, Marine Research Hub

Michael Burtov, Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Director, Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation

Daniel Kleinman, Founder and CEO, Seaworthy Collective

Mark Volchek, Principal and Founding Partner, Las Olas Venture Capital

Steven Vollmer, PhD, Director, School of Environmental, Coastal, and Ocean Sustainability, Florida Atlantic University

3:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. IMPLEMENTATION DISCUSSION, NEXT STEPS, AND CLOSING REMARKS

The Honorable Senator Steve Geller, SFRPC Council Member and Chair, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee; Broward County Commissioner, District 5

The Honorable Maria Marino, Chair, TCRPC; Palm Beach County Commissioner, District 1

3:30 P.M. ADJOURN

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