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

Isabel Cosio Carballo, MPA
Executive Director, SFRPC
isabelc@sfrpc.com; sfadmin@sfrpc.com
954.924.3653

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Leaders Across Southeast Florida's Seven-County Region Convene to Advance Blue Tech Business Growth, Investment, and Job Creation

Hollywood, FL - Leaders spanning government, business, research, education, workforce development, and the Blue Tech sector will come together on **Friday, October 30, 2026**, for **"Blue Tech Jobs: Policy, Investment, and Workforce Development in Southeast Florida."** Hosted jointly by the South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC) and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC), the Conference will be held at the Mary N. Porter Riverview Ballroom at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Together, the SFRPC and TCRPC serve Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties and have convened Joint Council Meetings and Regional Conferences since 2001.

The Conference will focus on how Southeast Florida can **expand its Blue Tech economy and create jobs by helping companies test, commercialize, deploy, and scale new technologies.** Public and private sector leaders will examine workforce training and education, land use and regulation, commercialization, demonstration projects, investment, and innovative partnerships, with a focus on practical, implementable steps local governments and regional partners can take to support Blue Tech firms and job creation. Blue Tech includes the technologies, products, and services used to explore, understand, use, protect, and work in the ocean and coastal environment.

A recent survey of Blue Tech firms in Southeast Florida conducted by the SFRPC found that **businesses rated permit delays and unpredictability, employee housing and living costs as significant or critical barriers**. Allowing for pre-cleared testing sites is one action local governments could take. These findings support a Blue Tech Jobs agenda focused on practical government action, investment, and workforce partnerships to help firms commercialize technologies and expand local employment.

"A growing Blue Tech industry needs more than promising ideas. It needs workers with the right skills and clear paths for companies to test and deploy what and where they build and it needs partnerships with local government. This conference will focus on those practical needs. I want us to leave with specific steps that employers, educators, and local governments can take together," said **The Honorable Senator Steve Geller**, Broward County Commissioner, District 5, SFRPC Council Member, and Chair of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee.

The program includes keynote remarks from **The Honorable Daniella Levine Cava**, Mayor of Miami-Dade County, followed by a special presentation, "Intersection of the Blue Tech Economy & Defense Priorities in Southeast Florida," by **Captain Rick Miller, U.S. Navy (Ret.)**, Executive Director of the South Florida Defense Alliance. Additional featured speakers include **The Honorable Maria Marino**, Chair of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and Palm Beach County Commissioner, District 1; **The Honorable Senator René García**, Chair of the South Florida Regional Planning Council and Miami-Dade County Commissioner, District 13; **The Honorable Senator Steve Geller**, Broward County Commissioner, District 5 and Chair of the SFRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee; **Bob Swindell**, President and CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Chairman of the Marine Research Hub Board;

and **Mark Volchek**, Principal and Founding Partner of Las Olas Venture Capital, along with leaders from government, business, research, education, workforce development, and the Blue Tech sector.

The Conference also includes an **implementation overview and four expert panels** examining what Blue Tech companies are building in Southeast Florida; workforce, credentials, and employer commitments; regulatory pathways, permitting, and local government tools; and research, commercialization, and capital. It will conclude with an **implementation discussion focused on potential next steps, including a Blue Tech policy blueprint, candidate pilot project areas, and workforce action items.**

The Conference has been approved for **4.5 hours of AICP Certification Credits. Registration for the Conference is free, but space is limited. Register here.**

Special thanks to Silver Sponsors Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, Marine Research Hub, and Broward County, Bronze Sponsor Brizaga, and partner American Planning Association Florida Chapter, whose support helps make this Joint Conference possible.

About the South Florida Regional Planning Council

The South Florida Regional Planning Council is the largest of Florida's ten regional planning councils by population. The Council serves three counties - Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward - 70 municipalities and an estimated 4.9 million residents. The membership of the South Florida Regional Planning Council consists of county and municipal elected officials, gubernatorial appointees, and ex-officio members from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the South Florida Water Management District. The Council supports the region's elected leaders and public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders through regional, collaborative planning and the development and implementation of programs and strategies which create a better future for Southeast Florida.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Rebecca Landesman
SFRPC Communications & Marketing
rlandesman@sfrpc.com
(954) 924-3653