

The Florida Legislature
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

October 24, 2025

Dear Legislators,

We, the undersigned 61 organizations, call on the Florida Legislature to repeal excessive and dangerous sections of 2025's SB 180, the Emergencies bill, in the upcoming 2026 Legislative Session.

Most urgently, we urge you to repeal Section 252.422, F.S., (Section 18), and Section 28 of SB 180, which freeze cities and counties from adopting land-use regulations deemed "more restrictive or burdensome" than those in place before recent or future hurricanes — even if the changes are unrelated to disaster recovery. Section 18 relates to future hurricanes and prohibits counties (and the municipalities within them) even partially within 100 miles of a hurricane's track from implementing any more "restrictive or burdensome" comprehensive plan or land development policies, regulations or procedures, for one year after landfall. Section 28 of SB 180 effectively halts any land-use planning efforts for three years, and applies statewide, retroactive to August 1, 2024.

These provisions threaten the constitutionally guaranteed role of local governments to plan for growth to protect natural resources, water quality and public safety. Contrary to the stated goal of disaster recovery, tying the hands of local communities striving to address urgent growth and resiliency challenges puts Floridians at even greater risk from flooding, pollution and unchecked sprawl that erodes both the environment and quality of life.

There are other critical flaws within this legislation. Key terms, such as "more restrictive or burdensome," are not defined and create uncertainty for communities trying to plan responsibly. The law also unreasonably inhibits local decision-making and exposes local governments and taxpayers to costly litigation by granting unprecedented legal standing to an array of entities to challenge local government actions they do not favor.

It is important to note that these provisions did not receive the scrutiny of committee debate or public input in the Senate. Senators did not have the opportunity to fully understand their sweeping consequences before the bill came to a vote. Now that those consequences are clear, the Legislature has the responsibility to correct these missteps.

Citing SB 180, efforts have already been made to invalidate a wide range of locally approved measures aimed at sustainable growth and environmental protection. Most notably, developers are challenging Orange County's newly established policy on rural development, alleging that it is more restrictive or burdensome. The policy was approved by 73% of county voters, the most fundamental expression of local democracy. They are also threatening legal action to overturn Orange County's decision to deny a proposal to build thousands of homes in an environmentally sensitive area

along with an update of the county's growth plan that reflects years of work and community input, on the same basis.

With SB 180, the Legislature has sabotaged its own efforts to create a safer, more sustainable and more affordable future for Floridians. Initiatives like septic-to-sewer and stormwater grants to improve water quality and comply with the Clean Water Act, lighting ordinances to protect sea turtle habitat, resilience funding programs, and flood insurance rating systems rely on voluntary participation by local governments and often require changes to policies and procedures that could be deemed "more restrictive or burdensome." If SB 180 stands as written, these critical initiatives will be delayed or blocked.

Local leaders and their constituents know their communities best. They need the flexibility to manage growth, protect water quality and wildlife habitats, preserve agricultural land and plan for public services and infrastructure that keep pace with development. If Florida is to achieve a sustainable future, maintaining our greatest assets – our environment, quality of life and the economy that depends on both – legislators must fix the fatal flaws in SB 180.

Sincerely,

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