



**FLORIDA**  
**CONSERVATION**  
**VOTERS**

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By hand-delivery

November 26, 2018

The Honorable Jose Oliva and The Honorable Bill Galvano  
The Florida Legislature  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Speaker Oliva and President Galvano:

On behalf of Florida Conservation Voters and our more than 90,000 supporters, I urge you to create a Joint Select Committee on Climate Change for the 2019-2020 Legislative Sessions.

Climate change is the single biggest threat facing Florida. The recent red tide and algae crisis, plus the increase in rapidly-intensifying hurricanes, provide two recent examples of what our state faces with rising ocean temperatures and changing rainfall patterns. Increased flooding, storm surges, and sea-level rise are pushing saltwater into our freshwater drinking water sources. In Florida's coastal areas, where the majority of our 20 million residents live, homeowners are experiencing increased property insurance costs because of their vulnerability to flooding during storm events. Across the state, coastal communities are already channeling significant resources to address climate change.

Beyond the incredible efforts being made by local communities, state leaders must also explore and enact policies to address not only the most harmful effects but also the root causes of climate change. In other words, it is up to leaders like you to ensure that our state explores not only adaptation to changing conditions, but also reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change poses a grave threat to our way of life and our economy, and for many people and Florida's wildlife, it is a threat to life itself. Over the next two years, Florida can chart a plan of action to protect our communities if you provide a forum for the exchange of policy ideas at the highest level of state government.

According to the latest scientific reports, we only have a short time remaining before climate change damages become irreversible. Just last week, thirteen federal scientific agencies including NASA, NOAA, and the Department of Defense released the fourth National Climate Assessment, which documents the serious damages climate change has already wrought throughout the country. [1] Of particular importance to Florida: extreme hot weather is getting more common, drinking water and wastewater treatment infrastructure may be severely compromised by climate-related changes, and rising sea levels will trigger migrations from our coastal communities.

**Under your leadership, the Florida Legislature has the potential to be a positive force for improving people's lives and transitioning Florida to a clean energy future. Over the next two**

years, a Joint Select Committee on Climate Change could explore and propose strategies for not only opening our electricity markets to accelerate our transition to clean solar power, but also for creating a modern, efficient, and sustainable transportation infrastructure. Additionally, the Committee could explore ways to protect the long-term sustainability of our natural carbon sinks and conservation lands that will help our communities endure the effects of climate change. These and more avenues must be explored and undertaken, beginning with the 2019 legislative session.

In Florida, our environment is our economy. Pristine beaches, ample outdoor recreation opportunities, vibrant wildlife and wetlands, and healthy forests are our state brand and key to our quality of life. Our tourist-based economy cannot suffer through year after year of coastal water problems before our state image is forever damaged.

The Florida Legislature has an obligation to conserve and protect our natural resources and scenic beauty. As provided in the Florida Constitution, "adequate provisions shall be made by law for the abatement of air and water pollution...and for the conservation and protection of natural resources." We believe that the climate change crisis facing Florida warrants--at a minimum--a serious and deliberative body to explore and propose policy solutions not only to address the worst effects of this unfolding disaster but also to enact policies that will solve the problem at its source.

You have the power to set Florida on a new course that will ensure future generations have a bright future here in the Sunshine State. Please use that power to establish a Joint Select Committee on Climate Change for the upcoming 2019 legislative session.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Alik Moncrief  
Executive Director  
Florida Conservation Voters

cc:

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[1] USGCRP, 2018: *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II* [Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, K.L.M. Lewis, T.K. Maycock, and B.C. Stewart (eds.)]. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA. doi: 10.7930/NCA4.2018. View the full report at <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> (last viewed Nov. 26, 2018).