



**Climate Change Conference  
Tampa, Florida  
May 9-11, 2007**

**SOCIAL ISSUES DISCUSSION GROUP  
SUGGESTIONS FOR CENTURY COMMISSION**

A group of 30+ individuals met on May 10-11 during the Climate Change Conference to provide recommendations regarding social issues related to climate change. In the short period of this working group it was difficult to prioritize all of the complex issues involving Florida's diverse population and social structure and climate change. To enable the group to address the numerous social issues in the 3 hours allotted time the issues were grouped as follows:

- Housing/Transportation/Energy Efficiency
- Disaster Preparedness/Recovery/Coastal Development/Security
- Population Growth
- Health/Water
- Education

Overarching issues:

- Climate change may drastically change existing socio-economic structure in Florida and the world.
- There is a need to ensure, as much as possible, that current social divisions and stresses are not made more divisive as a result of climate change.
- Planning and preparation should enhance the resilience of communities to respond to climate change.

Recognizing that each issue deserves a more thorough analysis, the group submitted this preliminary list of immediate recommendations:

**HOUSING/TRANSPORTATION/ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

- Create more energy cost effective communities through community design, green building and energy efficient vehicles, including public transportation
- Promote green building alternatives through education, taxing incentives, building and design standards, green-lending

- Develop and adopt housing design criteria to deal with the consequences of more intense hurricanes and possible sea level rise
- Change building codes to promote energy efficient building; good energy efficiency also aids in disaster preparedness
- Work on guidelines and incentives for Homeowner's Associations and individual homeowners for mitigation and adaptation measures
- The lack of public transportation alternatives is a major obstacle that must be overcome through light rail and other methods
- Change to energy efficient busses and taxis, including biofuels
- After providing alternative transportation, consider congestion zone tolls in larger cities
- Subsidize retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency
- Promote green roof technology through building codes
- Partner with utility companies to educate the public on energy efficiency and expand and increase incentives to homeowners (free/low cost loans for photovoltaic systems, net metering, solar panels)

#### **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS/RECOVERY/COASTAL DEVELOPMENT/SECURITY**

- Need vulnerable lands acquisition program similar to the natural lands acquisition program
- Need to include climate change in all nine components of local comprehensive plans
- Examine the reality and economics of insuring in coastal flood zone
- Need vulnerability assessment of our assets, and find a way to quantify these coastal assets – both natural and man made
- Need stringent policy at the state level to curtail seawalls and official policy of strategic relocation/retreat; develop a triage system to decide what will be saved and what will be given up to the sea
- Need new innovative programs and ideas regarding transfer of development rights for coastal lands susceptible to climate change impacts
- Need to retool the coastal high hazards area legislation
- Need better data for assessments (aerial photos need to be digitized to know where on a parcel an asset is located)
- Develop better integrated data systems for disaster preparedness, coastal development and recovery
- Need for better LIDAR data to measure coastlines and water depths
- Need to move from paper to digitized data
- Expand state incentive program to help people retrofit homes for disaster preparedness
- Need a carbon fee

#### **POPULATION GROWTH**

- Promote smart, climate change conscious growth

- As 90% of Floridians live within 10 miles of the coast, we need to plan for regional relocation and displacement
- Need to consider climate change in long-term regional planning
- Consider sea level rise impacts to the Bahamas the Keys and immigration and migration effects for Florida
- Plan for agricultural impacts affecting local food providers as well as rising transportation costs for food grown outside Florida
- Expect there will be less food, both to import and export
- Promote local food providers and community gardens
- Values might change as to what constitutes “wealth” and how that relates to the economy
- Plan for demographic changes and increased cost of living
- Promote “communities” not “neighborhoods”

## **HEALTH/WATER**

- Encourage water conservation – permanently
- Build Xeriscaping into codes and educate Homeowners Associations regarding principles and benefits
- Have municipalities lead by example in using Xeriscape landscaping
- Promote native vegetation and storm resistant tree canopy
- Charge impact fees for St. Augustine lawns
- Encourage/require grey water use through incentive programs
- Need more water retention areas for aquifer recharge
- Eliminate flat rate water billing and re-price water on a sliding scale incorporating drastically increased cost for large consumption
- Provide rebates for installation of low flow technology along with a progressive water pricing program
- Develop surveillance systems for monitoring tropical diseases
- Need research and action plan for tropical diseases
- Move health facilities out of vulnerable zones; provide distributed health services
- Need research on heat waves and affects/treatments for vulnerable citizens
- Add climate change health issues to state mandated Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)
- Research possible asthma increase due to climate change and identify indicators
- Determine how climate change will affect exercise and recreation and the resulting impacts to health

## **EDUCATION**

- Need to educate the public about the positive impacts that personal actions have on climate change; small changes can make a difference – multiplier effect

- Need to educate Home Owners Associations and have them adopt and promote climate friendly and energy efficient practices
- Create awareness through other community organizations; churches, clubs etc.
- Need to involve all educational stakeholders
- Model proper environmental policies in schools
- Need incentives for schools to develop climate-wise buildings or retrofit programs
- Test current student knowledge on global climate change
- Talk to curriculum development personnel, make sure curriculum that includes global climate change is being developed at every grade level from K-12
- Create Florida-specific text books on climate with recognition of regional differences within the state
- Sunshine State Standards must include global climate change