

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/SB 250 — Natural Emergencies

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Community Affairs Committee; and Senator Martin

The bill makes various changes throughout Florida Statutes regarding the preparation and response activities of state and local government when natural emergencies impact the state.

Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Division of Emergency Management to post on its website a model debris removal contract for the benefit of local governments (effective upon becoming a law).
- Requires the Division of Emergency Management to prioritize technical assistance and training to fiscally constrained counties on aspects of preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation (effective upon becoming a law).
- Encourages local governments to create emergency financial plans in preparation for major natural disasters.
- Provides that counties and municipalities cannot prohibit a resident from placing a temporary residential structure on their property for up to 36 months following a natural emergency under certain circumstances.
- Authorizes local governments to create specialized building inspection teams following a natural disaster and encourages interlocal agreements for additional building inspection services during a state of emergency.
- Requires local governments to expedite the issuance of building permits following a natural disaster.
- Increases the extension of certain building permits following a declaration of a state of emergency from six to 24 months and caps such extension at 48 months in the event of multiple natural emergencies.
- Prohibits counties and municipalities within the disaster declaration for Hurricane Ian or Hurricane Nicole from increasing building fees until October 1, 2024 (effective upon becoming a law).
- Allows registered contractors to engage in contracting for the types of work covered by their registration within areas for which a state of emergency has been declared (effective upon becoming a law).
- Prohibits counties and municipalities within 100 miles of Hurricane Ian or Hurricane Nicole landfall from adopting more restrictive or burdensome procedures to their comprehensive plans or land development regulations concerning review, approval, or issuance of a site plan, development permit, or development order before October 1, 2024. Additionally, such counties and municipalities may not propose or adopt a moratorium on construction, reconstruction, or redevelopment of any property damaged by Hurricane Ian or Nicole (effective upon becoming a law).
- Extends the date for fire control districts within 50 miles of Hurricane Ian’s landfall to submit statutorily-required performance reviews.
- Amends the Consultants’ Competitive Negotiation Act to allow for additional disaster-related construction projects relating to Hurricane Ian to utilize the “continuing contracts” provision through December 31, 2023 (effective upon becoming a law).

- Makes the Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan Program a revolving program and makes funds available for local governments impacted by federally declared disasters until July 1, 2038. The bill appropriates \$50 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the program for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and authorizes \$50 million of funds appropriated in special session to a previous version of the program to be transferred and used for this program.
- Provides clarification regarding the 45-day grace period following a hurricane in which owners must bring a derelict vessel into compliance before being charged with a violation.
- Directs the Division of Emergency Management to administer a revolving loan program for local government hazard mitigation projects, and appropriates \$1 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and \$10 million in nonrecurring funds from the Federal Grants Trust Fund for such activity for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
- Shields public utilities from liability for damages arising from changes in reliability, continuity, or quality of services stemming from an emergency or disaster.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023, except as otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 109-4