By Senator Geller

29-682-01

1 A bill to be entitled 2 An act relating to windstorm insurance risk 3 apportionment; amending s. 627.351, F.S.; 4 eliminating a requirement that certain insureds 5 lose their eligibility for the Florida 6 Windstorm Underwriting Association under 7 certain circumstances; providing an effective 8 date. 9 10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 11 12 Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 627.351, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 13 14 627.351 Insurance risk apportionment plans.--(2) WINDSTORM INSURANCE RISK APPORTIONMENT. --15 The department shall require all insurers holding 16 17 a certificate of authority to transact property insurance on a direct basis in this state, other than joint underwriting 18 19 associations and other entities formed pursuant to this 20 section, to provide windstorm coverage to applicants from areas determined to be eligible pursuant to paragraph (c) who 21 22 in good faith are entitled to, but are unable to procure, such 23 coverage through ordinary means; or it shall adopt a reasonable plan or plans for the equitable apportionment or 24 25 sharing among such insurers of windstorm coverage, which may include formation of an association for this purpose. As used 26 27 in this subsection, the term "property insurance" means 28 insurance on real or personal property, as defined in s. 624.604, including insurance for fire, industrial fire, allied 29 30 lines, farmowners multiperil, homeowners' multiperil, 31 commercial multiperil, and mobile homes, and including

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liability coverages on all such insurance, but excluding inland marine as defined in s. 624.607(3) and excluding vehicle insurance as defined in s. 624.605(1)(a) other than insurance on mobile homes used as permanent dwellings. The department shall adopt rules that provide a formula for the recovery and repayment of any deferred assessments.

- 1. For the purpose of this section, properties eligible for such windstorm coverage are defined as dwellings, buildings, and other structures, including mobile homes which are used as dwellings and which are tied down in compliance with mobile home tie-down requirements prescribed by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles pursuant to s. 320.8325, and the contents of all such properties. An applicant or policyholder is eligible for coverage only if an offer of coverage cannot be obtained by or for the applicant or policyholder from an admitted insurer at approved rates.
- 2.a.(I) All insurers required to be members of such association shall participate in its writings, expenses, and losses. Surplus of the association shall be retained for the payment of claims and shall not be distributed to the member insurers. Such participation by member insurers shall be in the proportion that the net direct premiums of each member insurer written for property insurance in this state during the preceding calendar year bear to the aggregate net direct premiums for property insurance of all member insurers, as reduced by any credits for voluntary writings, in this state during the preceding calendar year. For the purposes of this subsection, the term "net direct premiums" means direct written premiums for property insurance, reduced by premium for liability coverage and for the following if included in 31 | allied lines: rain and hail on growing crops; livestock;

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association direct premiums booked; National Flood Insurance Program direct premiums; and similar deductions specifically authorized by the plan of operation and approved by the department. A member's participation shall begin on the first day of the calendar year following the year in which it is issued a certificate of authority to transact property insurance in the state and shall terminate 1 year after the end of the calendar year during which it no longer holds a certificate of authority to transact property insurance in the state. The commissioner, after review of annual statements, other reports, and any other statistics that the commissioner deems necessary, shall certify to the association the aggregate direct premiums written for property insurance in this state by all member insurers.

(II) The plan of operation shall provide for a board of directors consisting of the Insurance Consumer Advocate appointed under s. 627.0613, 1 consumer representative appointed by the Insurance Commissioner, 1 consumer representative appointed by the Governor, and 12 additional members appointed as specified in the plan of operation. One of the 12 additional members shall be elected by the domestic companies of this state on the basis of cumulative weighted voting based on the net direct premiums of domestic companies in this state. Nothing in the 1997 amendments to this paragraph terminates the existing board or the terms of any members of the board.

(III) The plan of operation shall provide a formula whereby a company voluntarily providing windstorm coverage in affected areas will be relieved wholly or partially from apportionment of a regular assessment pursuant to 31 sub-sub-subparagraph d.(I) or sub-sub-subparagraph d.(II).

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- regular assessment pursuant to sub-sub-subparagraph d.(I) or sub-sub-subparagraph d.(II) as an incentive for taking policies out of the Residential Property and Casualty Joint In order to qualify for the Underwriting Association.
- exemption under this sub-sub-subparagraph, the take-out plan must provide that at least 40 percent of the policies removed

(IV) A company which is a member of a group of

credits applied on a group basis, and any company or group may

There shall be no credits or relief from

(VI) The plan of operation may also provide for the

apportionment to a company for emergency assessments collected

companies under common management may elect to have its

elect to have its credits applied to any other company or

from its policyholders under sub-sub-subparagraph d.(III).

award of credits, for a period not to exceed 3 years, from a

- from the Residential Property and Casualty Joint Underwriting
- Association cover risks located in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties or at least 30 percent of the policies so
- removed cover risks located in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach
- Counties and an additional 50 percent of the policies so
- removed cover risks located in other coastal counties, and
- must also provide that no more than 15 percent of the policies
  - so removed may exclude windstorm coverage. With the approval of the department, the association may waive these geographic
  - criteria for a take-out plan that removes at least the lesser
  - of 100,000 Residential Property and Casualty Joint
  - Underwriting Association policies or 15 percent of the total
- number of Residential Property and Casualty Joint Underwriting
  - Association policies, provided the governing board of the
- 31 | Residential Property and Casualty Joint Underwriting

 Association certifies that the take-out plan will materially reduce the Residential Property and Casualty Joint
Underwriting Association's 100-year probable maximum loss from hurricanes. With the approval of the department, the board may extend such credits for an additional year if the insurer guarantees an additional year of renewability for all policies removed from the Residential Property and Casualty Joint Underwriting Association, or for 2 additional years if the insurer guarantees 2 additional years of renewability for all policies removed from the Residential Property and Casualty Joint Underwriting Association.

- b. Assessments to pay deficits in the association under this subparagraph shall be included as an appropriate factor in the making of rates as provided in s. 627.3512.
- c. The Legislature finds that the potential for unlimited deficit assessments under this subparagraph may induce insurers to attempt to reduce their writings in the voluntary market, and that such actions would worsen the availability problems that the association was created to remedy. It is the intent of the Legislature that insurers remain fully responsible for paying regular assessments and collecting emergency assessments for any deficits of the association; however, it is also the intent of the Legislature to provide a means by which assessment liabilities may be amortized over a period of years.
- d.(I) When the deficit incurred in a particular calendar year is 10 percent or less of the aggregate statewide direct written premium for property insurance for the prior calendar year for all member insurers, the association shall levy an assessment on member insurers in an amount equal to the deficit.

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(II) When the deficit incurred in a particular calendar year exceeds 10 percent of the aggregate statewide direct written premium for property insurance for the prior calendar year for all member insurers, the association shall levy an assessment on member insurers in an amount equal to the greater of 10 percent of the deficit or 10 percent of the aggregate statewide direct written premium for property insurance for the prior calendar year for member insurers. Any remaining deficit shall be recovered through emergency assessments under sub-sub-subparagraph (III).

(III) Upon a determination by the board of directors that a deficit exceeds the amount that will be recovered through regular assessments on member insurers, pursuant to sub-sub-subparagraph (I) or sub-subparagraph (II), the board shall levy, after verification by the department, emergency assessments to be collected by member insurers and by underwriting associations created pursuant to this section which write property insurance, upon issuance or renewal of property insurance policies other than National Flood Insurance policies in the year or years following levy of the regular assessments. The amount of the emergency assessment collected in a particular year shall be a uniform percentage of that year's direct written premium for property insurance for all member insurers and underwriting associations, excluding National Flood Insurance policy premiums, as annually determined by the board and verified by the department. The department shall verify the arithmetic calculations involved in the board's determination within 30 days after receipt of the information on which the determination was based. Notwithstanding any other provision 31 of law, each member insurer and each underwriting association

created pursuant to this section shall collect emergency 2 assessments from its policyholders without such obligation 3 being affected by any credit, limitation, exemption, or 4 deferment. The emergency assessments so collected shall be 5 transferred directly to the association on a periodic basis as 6 determined by the association. The aggregate amount of 7 emergency assessments levied under this sub-sub-subparagraph 8 in any calendar year may not exceed the greater of 10 percent 9 of the amount needed to cover the original deficit, plus 10 interest, fees, commissions, required reserves, and other 11 costs associated with financing of the original deficit, or 10 percent of the aggregate statewide direct written premium for 12 13 property insurance written by member insurers and underwriting 14 associations for the prior year, plus interest, fees, commissions, required reserves, and other costs associated 15 with financing the original deficit. The board may pledge the 16 17 proceeds of the emergency assessments under this 18 sub-sub-subparagraph as the source of revenue for bonds, to 19 retire any other debt incurred as a result of the deficit or 20 events giving rise to the deficit, or in any other way that the board determines will efficiently recover the deficit. The 21 emergency assessments under this sub-sub-subparagraph shall 22 continue as long as any bonds issued or other indebtedness 23 24 incurred with respect to a deficit for which the assessment was imposed remain outstanding, unless adequate provision has 25 been made for the payment of such bonds or other indebtedness 26 pursuant to the document governing such bonds or other 27 28 indebtedness. Emergency assessments collected under this 29 sub-sub-subparagraph are not part of an insurer's rates, are not premium, and are not subject to premium tax, fees, or 30 31

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commissions; however, failure to pay the emergency assessment shall be treated as failure to pay premium.

- (IV) Each member insurer's share of the total regular assessments under sub-sub-subparagraph (I) or sub-sub-subparagraph (II) shall be in the proportion that the insurer's net direct premium for property insurance in this state, for the year preceding the assessment bears to the aggregate statewide net direct premium for property insurance of all member insurers, as reduced by any credits for voluntary writings for that year.
- (V) If regular deficit assessments are made under sub-sub-subparagraph (I) or sub-subparagraph (II), or by the Residential Property and Casualty Joint Underwriting Association under sub-subparagraph (6)(b)3.a. or sub-subparagraph (6)(b)3.b., the association shall levy upon the association's policyholders, as part of its next rate filing, or by a separate rate filing solely for this purpose, a market equalization surcharge in a percentage equal to the total amount of such regular assessments divided by the aggregate statewide direct written premium for property insurance for member insurers for the prior calendar year. Market equalization surcharges under this sub-sub-subparagraph are not considered premium and are not subject to commissions, fees, or premium taxes; however, failure to pay a market equalization surcharge shall be treated as failure to pay premium.
- e. The governing body of any unit of local government, any residents of which are insured under the plan, may issue bonds as defined in s. 125.013 or s. 166.101 to fund an assistance program, in conjunction with the association, for the purpose of defraying deficits of the association. In order

to avoid needless and indiscriminate proliferation, 2 duplication, and fragmentation of such assistance programs, 3 any unit of local government, any residents of which are insured by the association, may provide for the payment of 4 5 losses, regardless of whether or not the losses occurred 6 within or outside of the territorial jurisdiction of the local 7 government. Revenue bonds may not be issued until validated pursuant to chapter 75, unless a state of emergency is 8 9 declared by executive order or proclamation of the Governor 10 pursuant to s. 252.36 making such findings as are necessary to 11 determine that it is in the best interests of, and necessary for, the protection of the public health, safety, and general 12 welfare of residents of this state and the protection and 13 preservation of the economic stability of insurers operating 14 in this state, and declaring it an essential public purpose to 15 permit certain municipalities or counties to issue bonds as 16 17 will provide relief to claimants and policyholders of the association and insurers responsible for apportionment of plan 18 19 losses. Any such unit of local government may enter into such 20 contracts with the association and with any other entity created pursuant to this subsection as are necessary to carry 21 out this paragraph. Any bonds issued under this 22 sub-subparagraph shall be payable from and secured by moneys 23 24 received by the association from assessments under this 25 subparagraph, and assigned and pledged to or on behalf of the unit of local government for the benefit of the holders of 26 such bonds. The funds, credit, property, and taxing power of 27 28 the state or of the unit of local government shall not be 29 pledged for the payment of such bonds. If any of the bonds remain unsold 60 days after issuance, the department shall 30 31 require all insurers subject to assessment to purchase the

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bonds, which shall be treated as admitted assets; each insurer shall be required to purchase that percentage of the unsold portion of the bond issue that equals the insurer's relative share of assessment liability under this subsection. An insurer shall not be required to purchase the bonds to the extent that the department determines that the purchase would endanger or impair the solvency of the insurer. The authority granted by this sub-subparagraph is additional to any bonding authority granted by subparagraph 6.

The plan shall also provide that any member with a surplus as to policyholders of \$20 million or less writing 25 percent or more of its total countrywide property insurance premiums in this state may petition the department, within the first 90 days of each calendar year, to qualify as a limited apportionment company. The apportionment of such a member company in any calendar year for which it is qualified shall not exceed its gross participation, which shall not be affected by the formula for voluntary writings. In no event shall a limited apportionment company be required to participate in any apportionment of losses pursuant to sub-sub-subparagraph 2.d.(I) or sub-subparagraph 2.d.(II) in the aggregate which exceeds \$50 million after payment of available plan funds in any calendar year. However, a limited apportionment company shall collect from its policyholders any emergency assessment imposed under sub-sub-subparagraph 2.d.(III). The plan shall provide that, if the department determines that any regular assessment will result in an impairment of the surplus of a limited apportionment company, the department may direct that all or part of such assessment be deferred. However, there shall be no limitation or

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deferment of an emergency assessment to be collected from policyholders under sub-subparagraph 2.d.(III).

- The plan shall provide for the deferment, in whole or in part, of a regular assessment of a member insurer under sub-sub-subparagraph 2.d.(I) or sub-subparagraph 2.d.(II), but not for an emergency assessment collected from policyholders under sub-sub-subparagraph 2.d.(III), if, in the opinion of the commissioner, payment of such regular assessment would endanger or impair the solvency of the member insurer. In the event a regular assessment against a member insurer is deferred in whole or in part, the amount by which such assessment is deferred may be assessed against the other member insurers in a manner consistent with the basis for assessments set forth in sub-sub-subparagraph 2.d.(I) or sub-sub-subparagraph 2.d.(II).
- 5.a. The plan of operation may include deductibles and rules for classification of risks and rate modifications consistent with the objective of providing and maintaining funds sufficient to pay catastrophe losses.
- The association may require arbitration of a rate filing under s. 627.062(6). It is the intent of the Legislature that the rates for coverage provided by the association be actuarially sound and not competitive with approved rates charged in the admitted voluntary market such that the association functions as a residual market mechanism to provide insurance only when the insurance cannot be procured in the voluntary market. The plan of operation shall provide a mechanism to assure that, beginning no later than January 1, 1999, the rates charged by the association for each line of business are reflective of approved rates in the 31 voluntary market for hurricane coverage for each line of

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30 31 business in the various areas eligible for association coverage.

- The association shall provide for windstorm c. coverage on residential properties in limits up to \$10 million for commercial lines residential risks and up to \$1 million for personal lines residential risks. If coverage with the association is sought for a residential risk valued in excess of these limits, coverage shall be available to the risk up to the replacement cost or actual cash value of the property, at the option of the insured, if coverage for the risk cannot be located in the authorized market. The association must accept a commercial lines residential risk with limits above \$10 million or a personal lines residential risk with limits above \$1 million if coverage is not available in the authorized market. The association may write coverage above the limits specified in this subparagraph with or without facultative or other reinsurance coverage, as the association determines appropriate.
- d. The plan of operation must provide objective criteria and procedures, approved by the department, to be uniformly applied for all applicants in determining whether an individual risk is so hazardous as to be uninsurable. In making this determination and in establishing the criteria and procedures, the following shall be considered:
- (I) Whether the likelihood of a loss for the individual risk is substantially higher than for other risks of the same class; and
- (II) Whether the uncertainty associated with the individual risk is such that an appropriate premium cannot be determined.

 The acceptance or rejection of a risk by the association pursuant to such criteria and procedures must be construed as the private placement of insurance, and the provisions of chapter 120 do not apply.

- e. The policies issued by the association must provide that if the association obtains an offer from an authorized insurer to cover the risk at its approved rates under either a standard policy including wind coverage or, if consistent with the insurer's underwriting rules as filed with the department, a basic policy including wind coverage, the risk is no longer eligible for coverage through the association. Upon termination of eligibility, the association shall provide written notice to the policyholder and agent of record stating that the association policy must be canceled as of 60 days after the date of the notice because of the offer of coverage from an authorized insurer. Other provisions of the insurance code relating to cancellation and notice of cancellation do not apply to actions under this sub-subparagraph.
- f. Association policies and applications must include a notice that the association policy could, under this section, be replaced with a policy issued by an authorized insurer that does not provide coverage identical to the coverage provided by the association. The notice shall also specify that acceptance of association coverage creates a conclusive presumption that the applicant or policyholder is aware of this potential.
- 6.a. The plan of operation may authorize the formation of a private nonprofit corporation, a private nonprofit unincorporated association, a partnership, a trust, a limited liability company, or a nonprofit mutual company which may be empowered, among other things, to borrow money by issuing

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bonds or by incurring other indebtedness and to accumulate reserves or funds to be used for the payment of insured catastrophe losses. The plan may authorize all actions necessary to facilitate the issuance of bonds, including the pledging of assessments or other revenues.

Any entity created under this subsection, or any entity formed for the purposes of this subsection, may sue and be sued, may borrow money; issue bonds, notes, or debt instruments; pledge or sell assessments, market equalization surcharges and other surcharges, rights, premiums, contractual rights, projected recoveries from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund, other reinsurance recoverables, and other assets as security for such bonds, notes, or debt instruments; enter into any contracts or agreements necessary or proper to accomplish such borrowings; and take other actions necessary to carry out the purposes of this subsection. The association may issue bonds or incur other indebtedness, or have bonds issued on its behalf by a unit of local government pursuant to subparagraph (g)2., in the absence of a hurricane or other weather-related event, upon a determination by the association subject to approval by the department that such action would enable it to efficiently meet the financial obligations of the association and that such financings are reasonably necessary to effectuate the requirements of this subsection. Any such entity may accumulate reserves and retain surpluses as of the end of any association year to provide for the payment of losses incurred by the association during that year or any future year. The association shall incorporate and continue the plan of operation and articles of agreement in effect on the effective date of chapter 76-96, Laws of Florida, to the extent that it is not inconsistent with chapter 76-96, and as

 subsequently modified consistent with chapter 76-96. The board of directors and officers currently serving shall continue to serve until their successors are duly qualified as provided under the plan. The assets and obligations of the plan in effect immediately prior to the effective date of chapter 76-96 shall be construed to be the assets and obligations of the successor plan created herein.

- c. In recognition of s. 10, Art. I of the State Constitution, prohibiting the impairment of obligations of contracts, it is the intent of the Legislature that no action be taken whose purpose is to impair any bond indenture or financing agreement or any revenue source committed by contract to such bond or other indebtedness issued or incurred by the association or any other entity created under this subsection.
- 7. On such coverage, an agent's remuneration shall be that amount of money payable to the agent by the terms of his or her contract with the company with which the business is placed. However, no commission will be paid on that portion of the premium which is in excess of the standard premium of that company.
- 8. Subject to approval by the department, the association may establish different eligibility requirements and operational procedures for any line or type of coverage for any specified eligible area or portion of an eligible area if the board determines that such changes to the eligibility requirements and operational procedures are justified due to the voluntary market being sufficiently stable and competitive in such area or for such line or type of coverage and that consumers who, in good faith, are unable to obtain insurance through the voluntary market through ordinary methods would

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continue to have access to coverage from the association. When coverage is sought in connection with a real property transfer, such requirements and procedures shall not provide for an effective date of coverage later than the date of the closing of the transfer as established by the transferor, the transferee, and, if applicable, the lender.

- 9. Notwithstanding any other provision of law:
- The pledge or sale of, the lien upon, and the security interest in any rights, revenues, or other assets of the association created or purported to be created pursuant to any financing documents to secure any bonds or other indebtedness of the association shall be and remain valid and enforceable, notwithstanding the commencement of and during the continuation of, and after, any rehabilitation, insolvency, liquidation, bankruptcy, receivership, conservatorship, reorganization, or similar proceeding against the association under the laws of this state or any other applicable laws.
- b. No such proceeding shall relieve the association of its obligation, or otherwise affect its ability to perform its obligation, to continue to collect, or levy and collect, assessments, market equalization or other surcharges, projected recoveries from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund, reinsurance recoverables, or any other rights, revenues, or other assets of the association pledged.
- c. Each such pledge or sale of, lien upon, and security interest in, including the priority of such pledge, lien, or security interest, any such assessments, emergency assessments, market equalization or renewal surcharges, projected recoveries from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe 31 | Fund, reinsurance recoverables, or other rights, revenues, or

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other assets which are collected, or levied and collected, after the commencement of and during the pendency of or after any such proceeding shall continue unaffected by such proceeding.

- d. As used in this subsection, the term "financing documents" means any agreement, instrument, or other document now existing or hereafter created evidencing any bonds or other indebtedness of the association or pursuant to which any such bonds or other indebtedness has been or may be issued and pursuant to which any rights, revenues, or other assets of the association are pledged or sold to secure the repayment of such bonds or indebtedness, together with the payment of interest on such bonds or such indebtedness, or the payment of any other obligation of the association related to such bonds or indebtedness.
- Any such pledge or sale of assessments, revenues, contract rights or other rights or assets of the association shall constitute a lien and security interest, or sale, as the case may be, that is immediately effective and attaches to such assessments, revenues, contract, or other rights or assets, whether or not imposed or collected at the time the pledge or sale is made. Any such pledge or sale is effective, valid, binding, and enforceable against the association or other entity making such pledge or sale, and valid and binding against and superior to any competing claims or obligations owed to any other person or entity, including policyholders in this state, asserting rights in any such assessments, revenues, contract, or other rights or assets to the extent set forth in and in accordance with the terms of the pledge or sale contained in the applicable financing documents, whether 31 or not any such person or entity has notice of such pledge or

sale and without the need for any physical delivery, recordation, filing, or other action.

f. There shall be no liability on the part of, and no cause of action of any nature shall arise against, any member insurer or its agents or employees, agents or employees of the association, members of the board of directors of the association, or the department or its representatives, for any action taken by them in the performance of their duties or responsibilities under this subsection. Such immunity does not apply to actions for breach of any contract or agreement pertaining to insurance, or any willful tort.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

## SENATE SUMMARY

Eliminates a policy requirement that certain insureds lose their eligibility for the Florida Windstorm Underwriting Association under certain circumstances.