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2006

## 1 House Memorial

2 A memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging  
3 the review and reorganization of Federal Emergency  
4 Management Agency policies and administrative procedures  
5 for the purpose of avoiding delays in cleanup and  
6 reimbursement in the aftermath of declared disasters.

7  
8 WHEREAS, in the summer of 2004, the State of Florida  
9 endured an unprecedented incidence of four consecutive  
10 hurricanes striking the state in a period of 2 months, causing  
11 enormous destruction to property and infrastructure and leaving  
12 70 people dead throughout the state, and

13 WHEREAS, in the summer of 2005, the State of Florida again  
14 endured an incidence of four consecutive hurricanes striking the  
15 state in a period of 4 1/2 months, causing enormous destruction  
16 to property and infrastructure and leaving 67 people dead  
17 throughout the state, and

18 WHEREAS, though much reconstruction and rebuilding has been  
19 accomplished in the aftermath of Hurricanes Frances, Charley,  
20 Jeanne, and Ivan, many Florida communities are continuing to  
21 struggle with rebuilding efforts, and

22 WHEREAS, during the recovery process, the Governor's Office  
23 has worked diligently in securing funds for our state from the  
24 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and

25 WHEREAS, though the Federal Emergency Management Agency has  
26 provided much-needed assistance, many South Florida communities  
27 are currently being required to submit to new, needlessly  
28 restrictive bureaucratic policies in order to obtain relief from  
29 the agency, and

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30 WHEREAS, as a result of these new bureaucratic policies,  
31 South Florida communities are now confronted with unnecessary  
32 regulatory hurdles in obtaining FEMA funds that have delayed  
33 cleanup efforts and badly needed federal reimbursements and that  
34 continue to negatively impact the lives of Florida citizens, and

35 WHEREAS, under the new FEMA policies and administrative  
36 processes, instead of appropriate local governments acting as a  
37 conduit for management and disbursement of FEMA moneys and  
38 debris removal, each private community or homeowners'  
39 association is required to apply for such assistance on its own,  
40 in effect making it impossible for a city to obtain a blanket  
41 reimbursement to cover its cleanup costs for the city's entire  
42 jurisdiction, and

43 WHEREAS, under these new policies, municipalities such as  
44 the City of Coconut Creek have been advised that they will not  
45 be reimbursed by FEMA for cleanup services provided to private  
46 communities within the municipality, whether gated or otherwise,  
47 and have been instructed to advise such private communities to  
48 manage their debris removal and apply on an individual basis to  
49 FEMA for reimbursement, a process that is both administratively  
50 and operationally unsound, and

51 WHEREAS, certain legislative districts in the state  
52 encompass nearly 100 condominium and homeowners' associations,  
53 and many South Florida communities, such as Weston, are composed  
54 almost entirely of private communities, and

55 WHEREAS, these private communities are not equipped or  
56 prepared to undertake the FEMA application process and manage  
57 the level of administrative detail required under the new FEMA  
58 policies and processes, and

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59 WHEREAS, faced with the task of applying for, securing, and  
60 managing FEMA funds on their own, many private communities will  
61 experience significant delays in receiving funding or in some  
62 cases may not obtain FEMA reimbursement under these policies at  
63 all, and

64 WHEREAS, besides creating a bureaucratic nightmare, the new  
65 FEMA guidelines pose an enormous problem for local government  
66 solid waste management systems, and

67 WHEREAS, South Florida municipalities have the proven  
68 ability to provide citywide coordination of such large-scale  
69 cleanup efforts and can best provide an economy of scale as well  
70 as the most reasonable cost for these services, and

71 WHEREAS, the need for solid waste removal does not respect  
72 private community boundaries, and citizens expect their local  
73 governments to provide these services regardless of where they  
74 are located, and

75 WHEREAS, in a city such as Orlando, which operates its own  
76 solid waste system, the new FEMA policy means that the city  
77 would have to obtain reimbursement for cleanup through each  
78 homeowners' association or condominium association for areas  
79 that the city is already obligated to serve, and

80 WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the citizens of  
81 this state for local municipalities to be granted jurisdiction  
82 for the application and management of FEMA funds in the  
83 aftermath of a declared disaster, as has been the case in the  
84 past following other devastating hurricanes, and

85 WHEREAS, it is imperative that the Federal Emergency  
86 Management Agency reorganize its current policies and  
87 administrative processes in order to avoid further delays in

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88 ongoing cleanup and reimbursement efforts resulting from  
89 Hurricanes Frances, Charley, Jeanne, and Ivan, and to avoid such  
90 delays in the future, NOW, THEREFORE,

91

92 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

93

94 That the Congress of the United States is urged to initiate  
95 the review and reorganization of Federal Emergency Management  
96 Agency policies and administrative processes for the purpose of  
97 avoiding delays in cleanup and reimbursement in the aftermath of  
98 declared disasters.

99

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
101 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the  
102 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the  
103 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of  
the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.