

GOOD EVENING EVERYONE!

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY RECOGNIZING MR. JASON JOHNSON, PRESIDENT OF THE CARIBBEAN WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION...

THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SANITARY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING LUIS AUGUSTO DE LIMA PONTES...

AS WELL AS MR. MARK LEHIGH, CHAIR OF THE FLORIDA SECTION OF THE AMERICAN WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION...

THANK YOU ALL FOR CHOOSING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TO CONDUCT THIS IMPORTANT FORUM.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE DIRECTOR OF THE MIAMI-DADE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT, MR. LESTER SOLA FOR ALL HE HAS DONE TO LEAD WHAT WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HISTORY.

LESTER IS A TRUE PROFESSIONAL AND I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO WORK WITH HIM AND OUR TEAM AT MIAMI-DADE WATER AND SEWER.

TO ALL THE SPEAKERS, PARTNERS, AND PARTICIPANTS OF THIS 24TH EDITION OF THE CARIBBEAN WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION, THANK YOU AND WELCOME.

MANY OF YOU MAY BE FAMILIAR WITH MIAMI. AFTER ALL, WE ARE CONSIDERED THE GATEWAY TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. WE ARE KNOWN FOR OUR BEACHES, ARTS AND CULTURE, NIGHTLIFE, THE CAFÉ CUBANO AND MUCH MORE...

REMEMBER YOU HEARD ME SAY IT HERE TODAY – MIAMI IS THE COUNTRY'S NEXT GREAT CITY. WE ARE NO LONGER JUST A WONDERFUL VACATION SPOT, ALTHOUGH THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE.

WE ARE ALSO GROWING AS A HUB FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, RESEARCH AND FINANCE.

WE ARE WHAT OTHER METROPOLITAN AREAS AROUND THE UNITED STATES WILL LOOK AND FEEL LIKE OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS.

WITH 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS, WE ARE THE MOST POPULOUS COUNTY IN FLORIDA, WHICH IS NOW THE THIRD-MOST POPULOUS STATE IN THE COUNTRY.

BUT AS WE CONTINUE TO GROW, OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT MUST ADDRESS CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

AND A BIG PART OF OUR WORK HAS BEEN TO MODERNIZE OUR WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY.

WHILE OUR COUNTYWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE – INCLUDING OUR AIRPORT, PORTMIAMI, AND OUR WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT – ARE ALL RECEIVING UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF INVESTMENTS, AS WE SAY HERE IN MIAMI-DADE, *“IT STARTS WITH WATER.”* IN OTHERS WORDS, NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN OUR WATER.

AS I MENTIONED, THE WATER AND SEWER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM WILL BE THE LARGEST PROJECT IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HISTORY.

DURING THE NEXT 15 TO 20 YEARS, THE COUNTY WILL INVEST APPROXIMATELY \$13.5 BILLION TO ENHANCE AND UPGRADE OUR WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH THE USE OF STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

IT IS PROJECTED TO CREATE 16,470 NEW JOBS AND WILL IMPROVE THE RELIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM, AS WELL AS GENERATE \$24.9 BILLION IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PROJECT CANNOT BE UNDERSTATED, AND THAT IS WHY YOUR DISCUSSIONS HERE *'HIT HOME'* FOR MIAMI-DADE RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER INITIATIVES AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS I COULD HIGHLIGHT, SUCH AS OUR ONGOING WORK AT ONE OF THE CONTRY'S LARGEST ECONOMIC GENERATORS - MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - OR OUR EFFORTS AT THE "CRUISE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD," PORTMIAMI... BUT I DON'T WANT TO DELAY THE START OF YOUR CONFERENCE.

AS MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND ON BEHALF OF OUR 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO OUR HOME!

YOU HAVE PARTNERS HERE THAT ARE WILLING TO WORK TO GENERATE IDEAS AND PROVIDE SOLUTIONS TO CRITICAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT US

ALL, AND YOU HAVE STRONG SUPPORTERS IN THE COUNTY MAYOR'S OFFICE.

IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT YOUR TIME TOGETHER IS PRODUCTIVE, AND THAT YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO EXPLORE OUR BEAUTIFUL, WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY.

I HOPE THAT YOU WILL RETURN TO VISIT OR CONDUCT BUSINESS HERE AGAIN AND AGAIN.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

ENJOY YOUR STAY! MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

