

**GOOD AFTERNOON.**

**I AM CARLOS GIMENEZ, THE MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SUMMIT AND BE HERE WITH ALL OF YOU THIS WEEK.**

**I'M SURE MANY OF YOU MAY HAVE VACATIONED, DONE BUSINESS OR TRAVELED THROUGH MIAMI BEFORE, BUT FOR THOSE WHO AREN'T FAMILIAR WITH OUR COMMUNITY, WE ARE THE MOST POPULOUS COUNTY IN FLORIDA, WHICH IS THE THIRD MOST POPULOUS STATE IN THE U.S.**

**MIAMI-DADE IS HOME TO 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS AND HAS 34 MUNICIPALITIES.**

**OUR POPULATION IS ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE IN THE COUNTRY, IF NOT THE WORLD. OVER 50 PERCENT OF OUR RESIDENTS WERE BORN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.**

**WE HAVE BEAUTIFUL BEACHES AND OF COURSE, A VERY STRONG TOURISM INDUSTRY WITH MILLIONS OF VISITORS COMING THROUGH OUR PART OF THE WORLD.**

**WHILE LOS ANGELES LOOKS TO THE WEST, WE LOOK TO THE SOUTH, WHICH ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMY IN THE WORLD.**

**OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT CONSISTS OF A STRONG MAYOR AND A NON-PARTISAN THIRTEEN-MEMBER COMMISSION MADE UP OF SIX REPUBLICANS, SIX DEMOCRATS AND AN INDEPENDENT. THEY ALL AGREE THAT WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.**

**DUE TO OUR LOCATION, MIAMI CONTINUES TO BE KNOWN AS THE "GATEWAY TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN."**

**WE ARE PROUD OF THAT DISTINCTION, BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT DUE TO OUR LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY, WE ARE ALSO CONSIDERED TO BE "GROUND ZERO" FOR SEA LEVEL RISE IN THE U.S.**

**WE ARE "GROUND ZERO" NOT ONLY BECAUSE WE ARE A COASTAL CITY, BUT BECAUSE OF OUR UNIQUE GEOLOGY. A RISING SEA WILL NOT ONLY OVERFLOW OUR BEACHES BUT IT WILL ALSO LITERALLY COME FROM UNDER OUR FEET.**

**SEA LEVEL RISE RESULTS IN HIGHER LEVELS OF FLOODING DURING STORMS AND HIGH TIDES, DAMAGES PROPERTY, ESPECIALLY IN OUR COASTAL COMMUNITIES, AND THREATENS OUR DRINKING WATER DUE TO SALT WATER INTRUSION.**

**FOR THESE REASONS AND MANY OTHERS, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY RECENTLY UPDATED OUR COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN TO BETTER PREPARE FOR SEA LEVEL RISE AND CLIMATE CHANGE.**

**IN FACT, WHILE PREPARING FOR THE SIGNING OF THE CLIMATE LEADERS DECLARATION THIS MORNING, WE WERE PROUD TO SEE THAT WHAT WAS BEING ASKED OF THE MAYORS HAS ALREADY BEEN A PART OF OUR WORK FOR SEVERAL YEARS.**

**IN 2014, A COUNTY SEA LEVEL RISE TASK FORCE PRODUCED SEVERAL RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE NOW BEEN INCORPORATED IN OUR REGULATORY AND PLANNING CODES.**

**BUT MUCH OF OUR WORK DATES BACK DECADES.**

**IN FACT, OUR COUNTY'S LONG TERM URBAN CO2 REDUCTION PLAN WAS FIRST CREATED IN 1993 -- WELL BEFORE CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL**

**RISE WERE TOPICS ON EVENING NEWSCASTS AND CABLE NEWS NETWORKS. IN FACT, IT WAS BEFORE MOST CABLE NEWS CHANNELS CAME ONLINE!**

**HERE IS SOME BACKGROUND ON MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S EFFORTS:**

**WE COMMITTED TO REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM 2008 LEVELS BY 80 PERCENT BY 2050.**

**IN 2009, MIAMI-DADE JOINED THREE NEIGHBORING COUNTIES TO FORM THE SOUTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL CLIMATE COMPACT.**

**THE MAIN GOAL WAS TO HAVE BETTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE FOUR COUNTIES BECAUSE AS I'M SURE WE ALL CAN AGREE, MOTHER NATURE KNOWS NO GEOPOLITICAL BOUNDARIES!**

**THAT IS WHY OUR WORK TO SHARE INFORMATION, EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES; ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES; AND LOBBYING FOR FUNDING FROM THE FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT, IS SO IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR REGION.**

**ANOTHER KEY EFFORT HAS BEEN ADJUSTING HOW OUR GOVERNMENT OPERATES.**

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CURRENTLY HAS 26,000 EMPLOYEES SPREAD ACROSS 25 DEPARTMENTS.**

**WE PROVIDE POLICE, FIRE, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, PLANNING, ZONING AND REGULATORY SERVICES, AND MANY OTHERS.**

**OUR WORK TOUCHES EVERY RESIDENT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WHICH IS WHY, HOW WE PROVIDE SERVICES AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE IS SO IMPORTANT.**

**IN ADDITION TO UPGRADING OUR FLEET WITH MORE HYBRID AND FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLES, OUR COUNTY HAS TAKEN STEPS TO MAKE OUR DEPARTMENTS OPERATE MORE EFFICIENTLY AND OUR INFRASTRUCTURE MORE RESILIENT.**

**SINCE I WAS ELECTED MAYOR IN 2011, OUR AIRPORT -- WHICH ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE LARGEST ECONOMIC GENERATOR IN THE SOUTHEASTERN U.S. -- AND OUR SEAPORT -- WHICH IS RECOGNIZED AS THE "CRUISE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD" -- HAVE INCORPORATED EFFICIENCIES THAT HAVE SAVED**

**TAXPAYERS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND KEPT US ON AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PATH.**

**TOGETHER, MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND PORTMIAMI SUPPORT 600,000 JOBS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.**

**THE AIRPORT ALONE GENERATED BILLIONS IN 2014 AND ALSO RECENTLY LAUNCHED AN ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAM WHICH IS PROJECTED TO SAVE MILLIONS IN ENERGY COSTS PER YEAR.**

**AND THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE TOO OFTEN ELECTED OFFICIALS LIKE MANY OF US HERE TODAY ARE PRESENTED WITH A FALSE CHOICE -- EITHER OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE STRONG ECONOMIES WITH MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS, OR ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS ARE IN PLACE AND THEY STIFLE ECONOMIC GROWTH.**

**SOMETIMES WE ARE TOLD THAT WE MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO.**

**I DISAGREE.**

**AS A PUBLIC SERVANT FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT OUR COMMUNITIES CAN HAVE STRONG AND VIBRANT ECONOMIES *AND* PREPARE**

**FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES  
SIMULTANEOUSLY.**

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS PROOF THAT YOU CAN DO  
BOTH.**

**CONSIDER THAT SINCE THE END OF THE  
RECESSION, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS CREATED  
ABOUT 115,000 PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS, WHICH IS  
MORE THAN ANY OF OUR STATE'S OTHER 67  
COUNTIES.**

**AND YET, WE HAVE COMMON SENSE STANDARDS  
AND REGULATIONS IN PLACE BECAUSE THEY ARE  
NECESSARY FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR LOW-LYING  
AREA.**

**IN FACT, MIAMI HAS SOME OF THE CLEANEST AIR IN  
THE COUNTRY IN LARGE PART DUE TO THOSE  
COMMONSENSE REGULATIONS, AND EMISSIONS-  
FREE NUCLEAR ENERGY THAT POWERS MOST OF  
OUR AREA.**

**OUR LOCAL UTILITY, FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT  
ALREADY HAS RATES 30 PERCENT LOWER THAN THE  
NATIONAL AVERAGE AND HAS COMMITTED TO  
BUILDING 3 SOLAR FACILITIES BEFORE THE END OF  
2016.**

**THIS WILL TRIPLE THE COMPANY'S SOLAR CAPACITY, RESULT IN FEWER EMISSIONS AND ADD NEW JOBS FOR FLORIDA AND MIAMI-DADE RESIDENTS.**

**IN ORDER TO FUND ADAPTIVE AND MITIGATING STRATEGIES, A COMMUNITY NEEDS A STRONG ECONOMY.**

**AND WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL AT BALANCING STRATEGIES TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT, PLAN FOR THE FUTURE AND SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH.**

**IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, AS I'M SURE IN ALL OF YOUR COMMUNITIES, WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IS ALSO GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY.**

**AND WE HAVE PROOF.**

**FOR EXAMPLE, OUR COUNTY HAS THREE PRIVATE MULTI-BILLION DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE BUILDING OR PERMITTING PROCESSES RIGHT NOW.**

**MIAMI-DADE IS ALSO REVAMPING OUR WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE IN PART DUE TO THE ANTICIPATED EFFECTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE.**



**OUR COUNTY'S WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT IS ONE OF THE LARGEST IN THE U.S., SERVING 2.3 MILLION RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES. AND OVER THE NEXT 15-20 YEARS, NEARLY 17,000 JOBS WILL BE CREATED AS A RESULT OF THE BILLIONS WE WILL BE INVESTING.**

**MITIGATION OF SEA LEVEL RISE IS BUILT INTO EVERY ASPECT OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OF OUR WATER AND SEWER PROJECT.**

**IN PREPARATION FOR THAT EFFORT, OUR COUNTY HAS SPENT MILLIONS SINCE 2007 ON DATA COLLECTION, SALT FRONT MONITORING, AND UPDATING THE SALT FRONT LINE.**

**MILLIONS MORE HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO DEVELOP SOPHISTICATED GROUNDWATER MODELS TO FORECAST SALTWATER INTRUSION AND SIMULATE STORM SURGE AND FLOODING RESULTING FROM SEA LEVEL RISE.**

**IN OTHER WORDS, PREPARING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IS GREAT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF OUR RESIDENTS *AND* GOOD FOR BUSINESSES**

**TOO. AND THAT IS WHY OUR GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BE COMMITTED TO MAKING THE NECESSARY INVESTMENTS.**

**MY ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO ALLOCATED MILLIONS TOWARDS BEACH RENOURISHMENT AND WE HOPE TO QUADRUPLE THAT AMOUNT WITH STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING.**

**THIS EFFORT AIMS TO REPLACE AND MAINTAIN SAND ON OUR BEACHES... AND WE HAVE PLENTY OF THEM IN MIAMI!**

**THIS IS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HOW ADDRESSING A LOCAL NEED HAS BOTH ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS.**

**BY MAINTAINING WIDE RE-NOURISHED BEACHES AND HEALTHY SAND DUNE HABITATS, OUR COUNTY WILL HAVE GREATER PROTECTION FROM HURRICANE STORM SURGE AND ENSURE THAT OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO THRIVE.**

**MIAMI-DADE WILL ALSO CONTINUE ITS ENVIRONMENTALLY ENDANGERED LANDS PROGRAM, WHICH WAS FIRST ESTABLISHED IN 1990 TO ACQUIRE ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS**

**FOR THE LONG TERM PRESERVATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES.**

**LANDS ACQUIRED UNDER THE EEL PROGRAM INCLUDE LOW LYING WETLANDS IN THE COASTAL REGION OF OUR COUNTY.**

**PRESERVING THESE LANDS PROVIDES A NATURAL BARRIER TO SEA LEVEL RISE AND STORM SURGE AND MINIMIZES DEVELOPMENT IN LOW LYING COASTAL AREAS THAT ARE VULNERABLE TO THE EFFECTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE.**

**BUT EVEN WITH THE MILLIONS OUR GOVERNMENT HAS SPENT AND ALLOCATED TO STUDY AND BETTER PREPARE FOR OUR FUTURE, I'VE COME HERE TO LISTEN TO *YOUR* STORIES, AND TO *LEARN* FROM EXPERTS.**

**BECAUSE WHILE MY COMMUNITY HAS AND WILL CONTINUE TO MITIGATE, PREPARE, AND ADAPT, THERE IS ALWAYS MORE WE CAN LEARN AND DO.**

**AS MAYORS, IT'S UP TO US TO ADRESS THESE CHALLENGES AND LEAD THE WAY IN DEVELOPING THE MORE ROBUST EXPERTISE AND SOLUTIONS THAT OUR COMMUNITIES WILL BENEFIT FROM.**

**IT IS CRITICAL FOR US TO PROACTIVELY TACKLE THESE ISSUES AND VULNERABILITIES HEAD-ON AT ALL LEVELS.**

**I APPRECIATE THE TIME PROVIDED TO ME FOR THESE REMARKS.**

**I LOOK FORWARD TO MORE CONVERSATIONS WITH ALL OF YOU.**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**

