


Memorandum



Date: April 17, 2025

To: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor 

Subject: Creation of Boater Safety and Bay Education Task Force

Biscayne Bay borders virtually every mile of Miami-Dade County, cradling its 34 cities and its almost 3 million residents. It is both ecologically diverse and culturally significant, as well as an economic powerhouse for our State and County. Biscayne Bay and the Miami River are important components of the Miami-Dade's quality of life and economy generating over \$64 billion a year in economic output. Together, they support a wide variety of economically significant uses including recreational fishing, swimming, boating, and sailing.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's [2023 Boating Accident Statistical Report](#) found 659 reportable boating accidents and 59 boating related fatalities in the calendar year. Unfortunately, many of those incidents occurred within Miami-Dade County and this increase in accidents and fatalities on our waterways has inspired numerous individuals to work for the promotion of greater boating safety and the prevention of future boating accidents. To both protect residents and our marine resources, and honor the lives lost across our waterways ahead of the 2025 boater safety season-, I am creating the Mayor's Boater Safety and Bay Education task force. This task force will present recommendations to me related to this critical issue and help to develop a final report with recommendations to improve safety conditions across Miami-Dade's waterways.

As of March 2022, there were 74,622 registered boats in Miami-Dade County, Florida, making Miami-Dade one of the top five counties in Florida for vessel registration. Registrations continue to increase annually, and staff, recreationalists, and residents alike have observed increased boating traffic on the water.

Efforts related to boating safety may include efforts by Miami-Dade County, our 34 cities and municipalities, and also the State of Florida, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, which provides for State law enforcement on the water, as well as municipalities that border Biscayne Bay and which have their own municipal law enforcement.

My administration is committed to the protection of both residents and our natural resources and wishes to receive recommendations related to increasing safety across our county waterways from the Boater Safety and Bay Education task force. These recommendations may include, but should not be limited to boating safety issues in Miami-Dade County, education and outreach efforts to increase safe recreation, coordination and communication between County, State, and municipal law enforcement, the future creation of a permanent County advisory board related to boating safety and bay education and the composition thereof, and recommendations regarding proposed State legislation, activities, and appropriations.

As part of their duties, the task force shall review relevant data and prior reports and assessments related to safety and recreation along Miami-Dade County waterways and hear advice and recommendations from County staff, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the task force may hear additional presentations and comments from other experts and community leaders.

The task force is advisory only and shall not have the power or authority to commit Miami-Dade County or any of its agencies or instrumentalities to any policies, incur any financial obligations, or to create any liability, contractual or otherwise, on behalf of Miami-Dade County or any of its agencies or instrumentalities.

The Task Force will include one representative from the following organizations, based in Miami-Dade County:

1. Member who is regarded as a community leader on boater safety and bay education, *Andres Fernandez, The Lucy Fernandez Foundation*
2. Member who is regarded as a community leader on boater safety and bay education, *Nick Estrella, The Monica Burguera Foundation*
3. Member who represents local enforcement and accountability, *State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle*
4. Member who represents the recreational boating industry, *Captain Glenn Clyatt, HMY Yachts*
5. Member who possesses expertise in community and economic vitality, *Taylor White, Key Biscayne Community Foundation*
6. Member who is representative of the local commercial vessel or operator industry, *Mike Simpson, Island Queen Fleet-Bayside*
7. Member who is representative of the community-at-large and has demonstrated an engagement in boater safety and bay education, *Aabad Melwani, Rickenbacker marina*
8. Member who is representative of the community-at-large and has demonstrated an engagement in boater safety and bay education, *Larry Barryman, Manager, Miami International Boat show*

Members should have reputations for integrity and community service. The task force shall elect one of its members as chairperson and one of its members as vice-chairperson. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings at which they are present. The vice chairperson shall act as chairperson in the absence of their chairperson. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation and shall not be eligible for reimbursement of expenses accrued in service as a member of this task force, including travel expenses.

I have appointed Loren Parra, Miami-Dade County Chief Resilience Officer, to provide adequate staff and support services to the task force. The County Attorney's Office shall provide legal counsel, as needed, to the task force.

A summary of all recommendations and the Task Force's deliberations will be presented to the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners. All meetings will be noticed, and all public records will be maintained, in accordance with the Government in the Sunshine Laws.

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Members of the Board of County Commissioners and their staff are invited to attend. The task force is anticipated to complete its work and sunset within seven months but shall not exceed one year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Loren Parra, Chief Resilience Officer, at (786)-685-9932 or loren.parra@miamidade.gov.

C: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
 Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney
 Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney
 Office of the Mayor Senior Staff
 Department Directors
 Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs
 Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor
 Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board