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Dear Friends,

We have just suffered through an egregious legislative session this year where the cuts to the environment are overwhelming and in some cases will impact us locally in ways we have not yet determined. I think one of my most important messages this summer is the importance of making your voice heard and becoming civically engaged. As business owners, homeowners, parents and community leaders you are in the best position to speak out on issues we all care about. Too few citizens are talking about the environment. How do I know this? Because the political candidates recently elected have not made the environment a priority and our local mayoral candidates are not connecting the dots on the importance of the environment to Miami Dade's economy.

Each one of us has the power right now to not only go out and vote, but also to send an email or make a phone call to both mayoral candidate campaigns now and let them know you are concerned with the following:

**1) Growth Management: Holding the Line on the Urban Development Boundary.** The current Comprehensive Development Plan and the current Urban Development Boundary must be maintained at all costs. There is not an alternative. The current UBD, while not optimal for either the environment or development, was created through an open political process. Reopening the discussion on the UBD will lead only to politically based intrusions detrimental to the future. Growth must be directed and incentivized to infilling within existing developed areas. Given the Legislature's irrational gutting of our state oversight and growth management laws, a properly funded, totally non-political, professional local [Planning Department](#) whose recommendations are followed by elected officials will now be the principal protection Miami-Dade citizens have to ensure our environment, water supplies, schools, infrastructure, roads, economic base, and other critical community needs are not compromised.

**2) Local Environmental Regulation and Oversight.** Given the Legislature's cutback on state environmental protections, it is more important than ever that the local [Department of Environmental Resources Management \(DERM\)](#) be properly funded, professionally directed, and non-politicized. DERM must retain its ability to act responsibly to ensure our air and water quality are maintained, and our other environmental resources are protected. State and Federal agencies responsibilities for environmental permitting remain critically important, as their purview is at higher landscape scales, which are essential complements to the local perspective.

**3) Public Health and Water Quality.** Water - non-polluted, clean, in sufficient quantity from the Biscayne Aquifer - is essential to the people of Miami-Dade County. Without sufficient clean water, Miami-Dade is uninhabitable. Water quantity and quality depend on restoration



of the Everglades, the source of our water. Without clean water, human health is threatened. Human health and the economy are also threatened by degrading water and sewage pipes, inadequate water treatment, and offshore discharge. The [Department of Water and Sewer](#) must be allowed to retain its income and apply this to infrastructure repairs. Water treatment must be upgraded and offshore discharge eliminated.

4) **Everglades and Biscayne Bay Restoration.** THE KEY to the environment, quality of life, and water supply of Miami-Dade County is the Everglades. It is essential that Miami-Dade not only support and advocate for Federal and state action on restoration but itself move to control lateral seepage, follow zoning and planning to eliminate nonconforming use of wetlands, and stop the proliferation of rock mines, critical threats to water retention and quality. Biscayne Bay similarly needs to be protected from water pollution and other abuse and its coastal wetlands restored. Massive projects now underway or planned, such as port expansion, dredging, and power plant siting have grave risks to the Bay and if they happen need to proceed in a fashion that is protective of the bay and its resources. Our two national parks, state parks, and [county-owned](#) environmentally sensitive lands are [public treasures](#) for future generations and need to be protected and properly funded.

5) **Climate Change.** Sea level is rising rapidly and low-lying Miami-Dade is one of the most threatened urban areas in the world. Proactive action now is the most economical approach to meeting the challenges of sea level rise. The way forward has been identified through a public process. Maintaining the [Office of Sustainability](#), moving on the recommendations of the [Climate Change Task Force](#), and implementing [Green Print](#) will help to ensure Miami-Dade's viability as a place for people to live.

With Hope and Dedication,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Laura Reynolds". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the closing of the letter.

Laura Reynolds

Executive Director