



January 20, 2026

Via Email Delivery

The Honorable Nick DiCeglie
Florida Senate
414 Senate Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Re: SB 840 – Land Use Regulations for Local Governments Affected by Natural Disasters
1.20.2026 Agenda, Senate Committee on Community Affairs

Dear Senator DiCeglie:

On behalf of the Florida League of Cities and the 411 cities, towns, and villages we represent, thank you for your continued work on post-disaster recovery policy and for filing SB 840 to refine provisions enacted in last session's SB 180. Cities appreciate your efforts to clarify how these temporary land-use limitations apply following major storms and to address implementation challenges identified since SB 180 became law.

SB 840 includes several targeted changes that cities view as constructive, including narrowing the definition of "impacted local government," refining the scope of post-storm enforcement limitations, and removing the private right of action and associated one-sided attorney fee provisions that created uncertainty for local governments. Cities strongly support the bill's express authorization for local governments to require documentation demonstrating hurricane-related damage, which helps ensure that post-storm relief is appropriately targeted to impacted properties without unnecessarily constraining local decision-making for the broader community.

As the bill moves forward, cities respectfully request additional clarity regarding the definition of "impacted local government." As drafted, the definition relies on two qualifiers: proximity to a storm's track and inclusion in a federal major disaster declaration. Based on cities' experience implementing SB 180, reliance on federal disaster declarations, particularly when those declarations are amended over time, can create uncertainty as to which jurisdictions are subject to the bill's restrictions. For example, amendments to recent major disaster declarations have ultimately resulted in all 67 counties being included, even when storm impacts were not uniform statewide.

Cities are concerned that this dynamic, when paired with a geographic trigger tied to storm track distance, may complicate implementation and create confusion for residents and local officials as disaster declarations evolve. Clarifying that the bill refers to the initial federal major disaster declaration would provide greater certainty, ensure consistent application, and better align the bill's restrictions with areas directly impacted by the storm event.

Florida's cities remain committed to working collaboratively with the Legislature to support efficient disaster recovery while maintaining clear and workable frameworks for local implementation. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and welcome the opportunity to work with you on clarifying language as SB 840 proceeds through the committee process.

Sincerely,

Matthew Singer
Legislative Advocate
Florida League of Cities, Inc.

cc: Chair Yarborough and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

