



What is the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact?

The Compact is an agreement adopted by the Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm Beach County Commissions in January 2010. The counties recognized the vulnerability of the Southeast Florida region to the impacts of climate change and resolved to **work collaboratively on mitigation and adaptation strategies** such as joint policies to influence climate/energy legislation and funding at state and federal levels, **developing a Regional Climate Change Action Plan**, and hosting annual summits to review progress and discuss strategies.

“This is a great model of a partnership and there will be a lot of us looking to promulgate this as a model.”

- Margaret Davidson, Director, NOAA Coastal Science Center, Dec. 9, 2011

How did it get started?

Representatives of the four County Commissions came together at the 2009 Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit hosted by Broward County. The representative discussed regional challenges and **threats from global climate change on the 5.9 million residents** of this region, and a call to action for regionalized efforts was issued in the form of the Compact.



What's been accomplished to date?

Following the October 2009 summit, the Compact formed a Staff Steering Committee with representatives from each of the Compact Counties and the 109 cities of the region, as well as ex-officio advice from regional entities such as the South Florida Water Management District, South Florida Regional Planning Council, and others.

Federal and state legislative programs were coordinated in 2010-2013. This led the state legislature to **create the Adaptation Action Area (AAA) designation for areas uniquely vulnerable to climate impacts**, including sea level rise, to serve as a planning tool and encourage technical assistance and funding opportunities.

With the support of a variety of local, regional, state, and federal agencies (NOAA, USACE, USGS, and USEPA), **the Compact developed a technical foundation for regional climate issues**. Finally, with the input of myriad stakeholders, the draft Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) was developed in December 2011. The RCAP was finalized in October 2012 after incorporating stakeholder feedback.

The RCAP's 110 action items aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change over the next five years. The document was formally adopted by all Compact Counties in the spring of 2014. Ongoing workshops to aid in the implementation of the RCAP's 110 action items began in 2013.



“...no region in the country has tried to tackle climate change on the same scale as what the four South Florida counties propose, according to Ron Sims, former secretary of U.S. Housing and Urban Development.” - *Andy Reid, Sun Sentinel and Huffington Post Miami, Dec. 7, 2012*

Who's taking notice?

The efforts of the Compact's four counties have garnered attention from a variety of local, national and international sources. Here are a few examples.

- **THE WHITE HOUSE:** In 2009, the White House requested a white paper on the Compact. The region was then chosen for a White House Council on Environmental Quality listening session held June 23, 2010. Compact efforts have been highlighted in the Progress Report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, and in 2013 Broward County Commissioner Kristin Jacobs was appointed to President's Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. Two other staff steering members were also recognized as Champions of Change by the White House.
- **MEDIA:** Coverage on the Compact has appeared in every major local paper in the region and at the national level on ClimateWire, Bloomberg News, Climate Central, CNN, New York Times and Rolling Stone.
- **ACADEMIA:** FAU, UM, FIU and other local universities are working with the Compact to advance climate science and assessment tools. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) focused a semester-long graduate student class on exploring our vulnerability to sea level rise using the tools developed locally. Yale published an extensive article on the topic, and Yale's Cultural Cognition Project is currently assisting in implementation.
- **FEDERAL LEGISLATORS:** Members of Congress on May 13, 2011, urged the inclusion of Adaptation Action Area designation into the US Army Corps of Engineers' Operations & Maintenance account. In 2012, the Compact was highlighted by the Senate as an example of local response. In 2013, three of four compact county mayors and all staff steering committee mayors submitted a joint letter to the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change proposing ways federal government could help local governments and regions.
- **NACo:** The Compact Counties received recognition also came from the NACo Achievement Award in 2010 for conducting the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit and in 2011 for progress implementing the Compact.
- **NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT:** The Compact is highlighted in the draft assessment as an excellent example of regional cooperation in addressing the challenges of climate change and sea level rise.
- **KRESGE FOUNDATION:** In late 2012, the Kresge Foundation awarded a three-year, \$975,000 grant to the Institute for Sustainable Communities to support the implementation of the RCAP.

"County governments estimate that the damages could rise to billions or even trillions of dollars. In and around Miami, local officials are grappling head on with the problem."

– Coral Davenport, New York Times, May 7, 2014

What's next?

The Compact members and participants look forward to another productive year of regional collaboration and will continue to seek opportunities to bring additional funding and resources to the region for climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. Activities for the coming year include:

- Implementation of the RCAP with the Yale Cultural Cognition Project, support from the Institute of Sustainable Communities and funding from the Kresge Foundation.
- Engagement of the region's 109 municipal partners through the Mayors' Climate Action Pledge.
- Advocacy for the 2014 State and Federal Energy and Climate Legislative Program.
- Supporting the Adaptation Action Area pilot project in partnership with Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, South Florida Regional Planning Commission and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Each of the Compact partners is moving forward to implement greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation strategies. Working with municipal partners, key strategies are advancing to create a more economically competitive and climate-resilient community.