

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement By:

Stronger Safer Florida

Regarding the Florida Legislature's Passage of SB 1770

Tallahassee, Fla. – Today leaders from the statewide business, conservation and consumer groups who represent Stronger Safer Florida commended members of the Florida Legislature for passing SB 1770.

Thomas C. Feeney, III, President & Chief Executive Officer, Associated Industries of Florida

“We applaud Sen. David Simmons for championing reform of Citizens Property Insurance Corp. and thank the members of the Florida Legislature for supporting this good bill, which is a start to better protecting our state and all Floridians. While the final bill does not include language to fully rectify the ongoing issues related to the state-run insurer, SB 1770 is a step in the right direction to better protect the majority of Floridians – including Florida’s business community. We urge Governor Scott to sign this bill into law, and moving forward ask the Florida Legislature to consider implementing additional laws to reduce the risk associated with Citizens and the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund. In addition, we urge the management teams of Citizens and the Cat Fund, and the officials of our executive branch, to pursue every means possible to reduce our state’s hurricane tax risk and to prepare financially as well as physically for this year’s storm season.”

David Hart, Executive Vice President, Florida Chamber of Commerce

“By passing this legislation, both the House and the Senate took a step in the right direction towards fixing Florida’s broken property insurance system. The Florida Chamber applauds lawmakers for helping reduce taxpayers’ risk in the event of a catastrophic storm and for creating a roadmap to help return Citizens to being the insurer of last resort. While the Legislature made progress on this issue in the 2013 Legislative Session, there is still much work to be done to make Florida more competitive. This session was the right time to right-size Florida’s Hurricane Catastrophe Fund (CAT Fund,) because, as Insurance Consumer Advocate Robin Smith Westcott noted, it would not raise rates. By doing nothing on the CAT Fund, the Legislature balked at the chance to implement more significant property insurance reform.”

Gary Appelson, Policy Coordinator, Sea Turtle Conservancy

“The coastal preservation language in this bill restricts state subsidies for new construction in the most flood-prone and high-risk locations in Florida. Where we build and how we build are critical components to protecting Florida’s environment and wildlife. Today’s passage of SB 1770 is a step in the right direction. This is good for all Floridians and our coastal environments. We are grateful to the members for supporting SB 1770. This is a much-needed first step to implementing fiscally sensible reforms to Citizens Property Insurance Corp. We urge the Florida Legislature to continue on this path during the 2014 legislative session, and consider additional ways to reduce the risk associated with Citizens as well as the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund.”

Manley Fuller, President, Florida Wildlife Federation

“The Florida Wildlife Federation commends the Florida Legislature for passing SB 1770. Thanks to the efforts of Sen. David Simmons, Reps. Bryan Nelson, Doug Holder, John Wood and many other members who understand the importance of reducing the risk associated with Citizens Property Insurance Corp., SB 1770 will prohibit state backed coverage in our most storm prone low lying coastal areas. This is an important price signal that should discourage the most reckless forms of coastal development and will ultimately serve to protect Florida’s coastal environment and our wildlife. Additionally, the reforms in this bill will better protect all Floridians who call our hurricane-prone state home. We urge Governor Scott to sign this bill and look forward to continuing on this path of reform for the good of all Floridians and our environment.”

Christian R. Cámara, Florida State Director, R Street Institute

"Today's passage of the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation reform package is a win for Florida taxpayers, consumers, businesses, and charities. The bipartisan reforms contained in SB 1770 are a modest step toward restoring Citizens as a true insurer of last resort, promoting competition in the state's insurance market, and protecting Florida's environmentally-sensitive coastal areas against irresponsible overdevelopment. Governor Rick Scott would do well in quickly signing this good piece of legislation."

Janet Bowman, Director of Legislative Policy and Strategies, The Nature Conservancy

“We are pleased the legislature recognizes the importance of Florida's sensitive shoreline seaward of the coastal construction coast line and the importance of limiting coverage in such high risk areas.”

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Stronger Safer Florida is a nonpartisan coalition comprised of business, consumer and environmental groups from throughout Florida. For more information, visit www.strongersaferflorida.org.