

United States Senate

February 27, 2025

Lieutenant General William "Butch" Graham, Jr.
Headquarters
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear General Graham:

I am writing to request the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) to allocate Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE) funding to all federally-authorized coastal storm risk management projects in Florida that have been impacted by recent hurricanes. Florida's coastal communities have suffered extensive damage, and action is needed to ensure the timely restoration and fortification of this cost-effective beach and shoreline infrastructure. This is an urgent issue made worse after four years of bureaucratic inaction.

Florida's beaches are not only vital to the state's economy and tourism industry, but they also serve as critical natural barriers that protect homes, businesses, and infrastructure from storm surge and flooding. Without timely assistance, the erosion and damage sustained from these storms will continue to leave Florida communities — that have partnered on and invested in these projects for decades — vulnerable to future weather events and disasters. This ongoing community vulnerability is exactly the situation that Congress aims to avoid through the coastal storm risk management authorizations and FCCE funding it provides to the Corps. Unfortunately, urgency has not been a driving force behind operations of the Army Corps, and vulnerable communities are left suffering.

Moreover, Section 1145(d) of the *Water Resources and Development Act of 2024* provides robust statutory direction to the Corps to renourish Florida projects consistent with previous practice, notwithstanding the agency's internal policy interpretations related to perpetual easement requirements that have hampered project rehabilitation, particularly in Pinellas County with disastrous consequences for barrier island communities still grappling with damage from Hurricanes Idalia, Helene, and Milton.

The Corps' commitment to disaster response and mitigation is essential to protecting Floridians. We cannot be prepared though for a new hurricane season if there is a backlog of years' worth of work. I appreciate your attention to increasing

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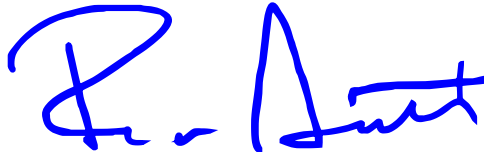
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efficiency of implementing these crucial projects, and expediting the needed repair and rehabilitation of these foundational projects for coastal protection.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to safeguarding our nation's infrastructure. I look forward to working together to support Florida's coastal communities and ensure they receive resources to recover and rebuild.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", with a stylized, cursive script.

Rick Scott
United States Senator