



SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS COUNCIL RELEASES TOP FIVE WATCH LIST

Issues that Impact Regional Success Require Regional Leadership

March 14, 2019 -- The South Florida Business Council (SFBC) today released its [Top Five Watch List](#) of issues that are critical to the region's success. The Watch List gives an overview of each priority and notes key opportunities in the year ahead that will determine how these issues may unfold in South Florida.

"The SFBC intends to harness the power of its members to showcase the value of taking a regional approach to our most pressing needs," said Christine Barney, Chair of the SFBC and CEO of rbb Communications. "We must keep a spotlight on the issues of the day, speak with one voice and ensure our legislators and local leaders take aggressive action to deliver solutions."

The SFBC's Top Five Watch List includes:

- 1. Mobility/Transportation:** Increasing commute times have a direct effect on the local economy through decreased worker productivity, delays in shipping and deliveries and dissuading outside companies from moving into our community. The push is on for laser-focused plans, funding solutions, transit-oriented development (TOD) and partnerships with new technology companies (ride sharing, dock-less bikes, scooters).
- 2. Education Quality:** Education is the building block of economic development. Companies move here and stay here because there is strong talent to hire and because their workforce feels there is quality K-12 education for their children. This year will see intense scrutiny on school funding, school choice and student safety.
- 3. Water Management:** Sea level rise, flooding, water management, beach health -- the list of issues surrounding this critical resource is long. Political will is stronger than ever to avoid repeating the negative impacts of red tides and algae blooms that plagued parts of the state last year. That means more debates on funding and how to meet the needs of the various "customers".
- 4. Affordable Housing:** As the nation's 12th most expensive metro area, South Florida needs to incentivize developers to build and maintain homes and apartments that workers can reasonably afford. That means protecting affordable housing program funds such as the Sadowski Trust Fund, State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) and encouraging transit-oriented development. Reducing the need for workers to move further away from job centers and on to already highly congested roads will also help mobility.
- 5. Tourism Growth:** Tourism adds revenue not only directly to those in the hospitality industry but to retail, arts & culture and more. In a state that relies on sales/fuel tax vs. income tax, tourism is a key driver of our economic health. Whether it's Visit Florida funding, ensuring our natural

resources remain attractive, or regulating the new sharing economy, critical decisions being made this year will impact our tourism viability in the future.

“While there are clearly many other issues on our radar affecting the success of the region’s business community, such as healthcare and workforce training, these five rose to the top because of their critical regional economic impact and likelihood of turning point legislation/activity this year,” noted Barney.

The Top Five Watch list can be found on the news section of www.soflobusinesscouncil.com.

ABOUT SFBC

The SFBC is a partnership between the Chamber of the Palm Beaches, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. Its mission is to assist with South Florida’s regional issues and use its resources to create solutions. The Chambers expect to use the power that comes from speaking with one voice to drive South Florida forward and make it a better place to live, work and enjoy. To learn more, visit www.soflobusinesscouncil.com.

#