



## Florida Regional Planning Councils: SB 1264 & HB 1125 Fact Sheet

Regional Planning Councils oppose the portions of SB 1264 and HB 1125 that remove all references to Florida's 10 Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) from Florida Statutes. Removing RPCs from Florida Statutes would negatively impact the state agencies, local governments and communities, small and large, who rely on RPCs to provide cost-effective services. Therefore, we respectfully ask that the language concerning RPCs be removed from both bills.

- **RPCs save state resources without duplicating services:** RPCs provide state agencies with a cost effective and efficient way to provide services and administer programs across Florida, which saves state resources.
- **RPCs help local governments meet state requirements and save money:** RPCs are recognized in Florida Statutes as the state's only non-regulatory, multipurpose regional entities that are positioned to address complex, regional and statewide challenges with innovative, effective solutions that meet the needs of the communities in each region.
- **RPCs provide critical services to small and rural communities:** RPCs ensure that small communities and rural areas can access technical assistance, grants and programs that would otherwise be out of reach due to limited resources and expertise.

### **Rural Communities and Small Urban Communities: Local Planning Technical Assistance; Map Modernization with GIS; Economic and Land Use Analysis; Economic Development Strategies; Rural Transportation Planning and Transportation Disadvantaged Programs; Emergency Preparedness and Long-Term Recovery Support.**

- RPCs assist municipalities and counties by providing technical assistance and data/GIS expertise for policy analysis and guidance concerning issues such as, but not limited to, implementing state initiatives, conservation strategies, economic development, emergency management transportation, land use decisions, and other needs including day-to-day operations.
- Many fiscally constrained rural counties and small municipalities have few planning staff and limited resources. RPCs provide **professional planning and GIS services to local governments** to assist in implementing their comprehensive plans and land development codes and to achieve community visions with data and map modernization. This includes assistance with state growth management and community planning requirements and other state regulations. RPCs provide these critical services, giving these communities the ability to meet state requirements and support development.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
  - The **Central Florida RPC** has completed a local mitigation strategy and continuity of operations plan for **Hardee County**, an economic development strategy for **DeSoto County**, and other projects at the request of their member counties and cities. The **Treasure Coast RPC** has provided on a pro-bono basis planning and zoning services for the **City of Pahokee** and facilitated the first new office building and apartments in over a decade.
  - The **Southwest Florida RPC** assisted small to mid-sized growers to increase access to new markets and to become more resilient. With support from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), SWFRPC developed the **Southwest Florida Fresh- Chose Local Chose Fresh** brand and promoted it throughout the region.

### **Resiliency Planning: Military Installation Readiness; Vulnerability & Adaptation Planning; Flood Mitigation; Florida Wildlife Corridor Planning; and Grant Writing and Administration.**

- RPCs conduct state-funded vulnerability assessments, map coastal risk scenarios, and develop strategies with critical stakeholders to determine long term plans to mitigate and adapt to changing conditions.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
  - Direct partnership and funding with the Department of Defense to ensure community Military Installation Readiness. This is implemented through the **Military Installation Readiness Review (MIRR)** process to analyze risks and future climate conditions and implement actions to foster, protect, and enhance military installation mission readiness. **Six of Florida's RPCs have conducted MIRR for their region** in partnership with DOD including **Emerald Coast RC, Tampa Bay RPC, South Florida RPC, Central Florida RPC, East Central Florida RPC and Northeast Florida RC**. RPCs are now working with regional stakeholders, the State of Florida, and the U.S. Department of Defense to secure funding for planning and infrastructure projects that will enhance mission readiness and national security.

- The [Apalachee RPC](#) manages the **Franklin County Living Shoreline project** that will create new nearshore reefs along Highway 98 to protect infrastructure, evacuation routes, and reduce shoreline erosion. ARPC was awarded a \$15 million grant and works with county and private sector partners, not otherwise eligible to apply for this grant.
- Six RPCs across the state are working together through the **Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation program** to study changes in rainfall intensity and inland flooding to identify and mitigate against risks and provide data to support **Resilient Florida** priorities.

**Emergency Preparedness and Long-Term Recovery Programs: First Responder Training; Emergency Response Planning; Healthcare Emergency Preparedness; and Long-Term Recovery Support**

- RPCs work closely with first responders and state emergency management staff to ensure that communities are prepared for hurricanes and other natural disasters, as well provide first responder training for large scale medical emergencies, hazardous materials emergencies, and urban search and rescue throughout the state.
- RPCs provide compliance and documentation assistance to private industry on Hazardous Materials storage, ensuring notification to FDEM and emergency responders.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
  - The [East Central Florida RPC](#) Emergency Management team coordinates training and resources for all of **Florida's Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces in partnership with the Florida Department of Emergency Management. All RPCs** collaborate to bring hundreds of firefighters and other first responders, experts, instructors, and businesses together each year at the annual **Florida HazMat Symposium training event and skills competition.**
  - The [Tampa Bay RPC](#) developed **Project Phoenix 2.0: The Recovery** exercise that examines critical issues and capabilities of Tampa Bay area small businesses and emergency management agencies during disaster recovery. This exercise simulates a Category 5 hurricane hitting Tampa Bay. The Project is being updated once again to include **new data garnered from Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton.**

**Economic Development Programs: U.S. Department of Commerce EDA designated Economic Development Districts; Small Business Revolving Loan Funds; Strategic Planning and Visioning; Economic Modeling; and Brownfield Assessments & Planning**

- RPCs are directed in Florida Statute to assist local governments with “activities designed to promote and facilitate economic development” in their respective regions. RPCs complement state and local government economic development efforts in their role as EDA Economic Development Districts by developing and implementing regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies; providing grant writing and technical assistance; and providing economic analyses using Regional Economic Modeling, Inc. (REMI) software.
- Assist community leaders and local governments in developing and reaching consensus on shared regional goals and strategies, with data driven analysis to address regional challenges and maximize opportunities; and implement economic development strategies linking businesses, job creation, infrastructure, land use, and transportation.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
  - The [South Florida](#) and [Apalachee RPCs](#) manage successful **Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Programs** to assist small businesses that do not qualify for traditional lending programs. The RLFs serve the local community by enhancing financing opportunities for businesses who want to establish or expand in the region, leading to new jobs and a stronger local economy.

**Transportation Programs: Rural Transportation Planning and Transportation Disadvantaged Programs**

- RPCs collaborate with FDOT, the communities they serve, local governments, their transportation agencies, and stakeholders to plan and implement transportation solutions, such as complete streets, and effective transit design.
- **Examples of RPC Projects & Services:**
  - The [Treasure Coast](#) and [South Florida RPCs](#) worked with the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (Tri-Rail), municipalities, and developers to facilitate **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** across the system, leading to the approval of hundreds of new apartments at the **Boca Raton Tri-Rail station.** The developer will pay to lease the land from Tri-Rail, reducing the need for operating subsidy, and new affordable housing will boost system ridership while accommodating growth in the area. Building on this success, more sites are in the planning process.

***Who pays for the important services and programs provided by Florida's RPCs?***

- RPCs are funded by member counties, cities, federal grants, and specific state contracts for services. RPCs do not receive general appropriation dollars and are not staffed by state personnel.