



News

Hinshaw and Florida International University Successfully Conclude Second Annual Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Conference

April 24, 2018

Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP and Florida International University recently hosted their annual Climate Change and Sea Level Rise conference at the Four Seasons Hotel on April 11, 2018. The conference was sponsored by TotalBank and Adler Group.

The conference focused on how sea level rise will affect business decision-making for the real estate industry, the lending industry, and the insurance industry in coming years.

The event received significant media coverage, including:

- ["Conference Focuses On Sea Level Rise Resiliency For S. Fla.," *Law360*](#) (*subscription may be required*)
- ["Tax increment financing could fund sea level rise mitigation projects," *The Real Deal*](#)
- ["Miami Streets Could Flood Every Day By 2070, But Businesses Will Adjust, Local Experts Say," *Bisnow South Florida*](#)
- ["The risk of sea level rise is chipping away at Miami home values, new research shows," *Miami Herald*](#) (quoting conference panelist Jesse Keenan)
- ["Second Annual Hinshaw/FIU Climate Change Conference on Economic Impacts to Insurance, Lending and Real Estate Industries," *Miami Beach Community News*](#)
- 'After Hours' photo gallery: "Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP held its climate change conference at the Four Seasons Hotel in Miami," *Daily Business Review* (print edition only)

The event was live-tweeted from the [Hinshaw](#) and [FIU](#) Twitter accounts. A [photo gallery of the event](#) is also available on the Hinshaw Facebook page.

Event Overview

Hinshaw's Firm Chairman Kevin J. Burke and Kenneth G. Furton, Florida International University's Provost, provided welcoming remarks. The keynote address was delivered by Professor Tiffany Troxler, Director of FIU's Sea Level Solutions Center. Professor Troxler argued that while sea level rise is a real and urgent problem for South Florida, the region already has "an incredible understanding of how to manage water," which gives it a competitive advantage

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in the race toward resilience.

- [Download a white paper](#) authored by Dr. Troxler, Dr. Sam Paustian-Underdahl, Dr. Carlos Parra, Dr. Ronald Mesia, Aris Papadopoulos and Dr. Nancy Scanlon. Titled "*Getting Ahead of the Curve for a Resilient Economy*," the paper provides an introduction to risks and opportunities of climate change for top business sectors in Southeast Florida. *Republished with permission.*

Panel Overview

The Government Panel, "The Boundaries of Responsibility" was moderated by WLRN Vice President of News Tom Hudson. Among the speakers on that panel were Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, Senator Annette Taddeo, Miami-Dade Commissioner Hon. Daniella Levine Cava, and South Miami Mayor Philip K. Stoddard. A special video message from Senator William Nelson was featured at the beginning of the panel. The panel discussed (and at times debated) how the various levels of government should be addressing sea level rise as it inexorably proceeds.

The Insurance Panel, "Insuring the Changing Coastline" was moderated by FIU professor Shahid Hamid, and featured panelists Ronald L. Kammer, Co-Chair of Hinshaw & Culbertson's Insurance Practice Group, Alex Kaplan, Head of SwissRE's North American Global Partnership and Michael Sparber, Senior Vice President of Riemer Insurance Group. The panelists discussed how coverage and cost of insurance is likely radically to change over the next few years, both due to sea level rise and to catastrophic weather exacerbated by global warming.

The Real Estate Development Panel, "Development in a Sea Level Environment," was moderated by Adler Group Executive Vice President Jonathan Raiffe. The panelists, Lise Anne Courture, Principal of Asymptote Architecture, Prof. Jesse M. Keenan of Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, David Martin, President of Terra Group and Patrick Murphy, Senior Vice President of Coastal Construction, discussed how resiliency may be pursued in South Florida.

A lunch panel, "The Latest Climate News," was moderated by Prof. Todd Crowl, Director of the Southeast Environmental Research Center at FIU and featured Prof. Evelyn Gaiser, Executive Director of the SEAS Institute and Prof. Richard Olson, Director of the Extreme Events Research Center at FIU. The panel discussed recent developments concerning the relationships between sea level rise and catastrophic events and how those will affect South Florida.

The afternoon opened with the Lending Panel, "Lending in the Age of Uncertainty," moderated by Prof. Carlos M. Parra from FIU and featured Jay Pelham, President of TotalBank, Charles Foschini, Senior Managing Director of Berkadia, Jon Gitman, Partner at BridgeInvest and Prof. Shimon Wdowinski of FIU's Department of Earth and Environment.

The final panel of the day, "What's Next? Recent Experience and Expectations for the Upcoming Year," was moderated by Prof. John Stuart, Associate Dean of the College of Architecture and the Arts at FIU, and featured Amy Knowles, Deputy Resiliency Officer for the City of Miami Beach, Adolfo Menendez of the Ontier Law Firm in Rome, Aris Papadopoulos, Distinguished Expert in Resilience at FIU and Harvey Sheldon, Partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson.

The conference was attended by more than 150 participants and members of the news media hailing from several countries.