

Florida's Historic Communities in Danger: State Bills Threaten to Destroy Valued Landmarks

New Law proposed in the Florida Legislature would spell an end to Historic Preservation in Florida's coastal communities

FLORIDA, USA, April 17, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lovers of historic buildings around Florida are [alarmed](#) about two unprecedented State Legislature bills targeting Florida's historic coastal neighborhoods that they worry will lead to widespread demolition and redevelopment.

“

We urge all stakeholders to join together to spread the word about these very bad bills while we work on amendments to exempt historic places and discourage demolition by neglect”

Daniel Ciraldo, Executive Director, Miami Design Preservation League

The bills' broad language would automatically label most older buildings as "nonconforming" if they do not meet the latest new construction requirements under the National Flood Insurance Program - despite that program and the Florida Building Code providing exemptions to accommodate for historic structures. This new law would effectively void historic preservation laws around the state, rendering tens of thousands of buildings throughout Florida suddenly "nonconforming" and leading to

speculative demolition.

Other provisions in the bills would remove local governments' powers to discourage "demolition by neglect," preventing them from requiring neglected historic structures to be maintained, reconstructed, or rebuilt.

If passed, the bills could spell the end of our valued historic neighborhoods and districts - many of which have stood for over a century amidst hurricanes, economic crises, wars, and more. Miami Beach, St Augustine, Key West, Tampa, St Petersburg, Jacksonville, Coral Gables, Palm Beach, Fernandina Beach, and beyond - all these historic places would be at risk by this wide-sweeping proposal.

Miami Beach, for instance, is home to the famous Art Deco Historic District, which includes over

800 buildings, many of which are in the noted architectural style. Miami Beach was the Wartime Training Center for the Army Air Forces during WWII, when soldiers stayed in the newly built Art Deco hotels and neighborhoods.

"We urge all stakeholders to join together to spread the word about this terrible bill while we work on amendments to exempt historic places and discourage demolition by neglect," says Daniel Ciraldo, Executive Director of the [Miami Design Preservation League](#).



Art Deco buildings in Miami Beach like these could be demolished under a new proposal in the Florida State Legislature

"These proposals could impact historic property owners' ability to receive loans and grant funds, place our local governments out of compliance with the National Preservation Act best practices, lead to potential delisting from the National Register of Historic Places, and circumvent Florida's 80 Certified Local Governments who have made historic preservation a policy and invested taxpayer funds in furtherance of these goals," he continues.

The bill's Senate sponsor for SB1346 is Brian Avila (R- Miami Springs), and the House sponsor for HB1317 is Spencer Roach (R- North Fort Myers).

Instead of destroying historic landmarks, the legislature should focus on providing incentives to help historic buildings remain resilient amid the impacts of climate change. Bulldozing our historic neighborhoods in the name of resiliency will leave our state with a negative economic impact: housing units will be demolished, exacerbating the affordability crisis, and visitors will go elsewhere to enjoy their vacations amidst a speculative demolition boom brought about by this bill.

Join us in opposing these bills and saving Florida's historic communities!

Contact:

Request an Interview with the group: info@savemiamibeach.org

Website: savemiamibeach.org

View the petition here: <https://chng.it/HbTf2yfRYS>

Groups who have expressed concerns/opposition to the measures as proposed initially

- National Trust for Historic Preservation

- Miami-Dade County
 - City of Miami Beach
 - City of Palm Beach
 - City of Coral Gables
 - City of St Augustine
 - Florida League of Cities
 - Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board
 - Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board
 - Florida Trust for Historic Preservation
 - Miami Design Preservation League
 - Dade Heritage Trust
 - Palm Beach Preservation Foundation
 - Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables
 - The Villagers
 - 1000 Friends of Florida
- (list in progress)

Next Hearings:

4/17: House Commerce Committee, 2pm House of Representatives, Location: Webster Hall (212 Knott)

4/19: Senate Rules Committee, 830am Location: 402 Senate Building

Watch on the Florida Channel <https://thefloridachannel.org/>

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