



Tampa Bay  
Beaches  
Chamber

# COMMUNITY ADVOCACY 2025

**Representing the needs of businesses  
along the Tampa Bay Beaches**

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## Local Agenda Items

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### **Agenda Item: Pedestrian Safety**

**Description:** Promotion and education of pedestrian safety including crosswalk & bicycle safety throughout Gulf Boulevard is paramount to the local community. The TBBCOC continues to work with Walk/Bike Tampa Bay on an education campaign. (Crosswalks; Education; Protection of current crosswalks)

### **Agenda Item: Beach Renourishment** \*Local issue combined with county, state & federal government

**Description:** Beach renourishment is essential for protecting our award-winning beaches and maintaining a strong and prosperous local economy. The beaches are essential in our efforts to continue breaking tourism records year over year. (Advocate for easements; Army Corp Engineers). Additionally, the TBBCoC encourages the county to approve an increase in the nourishment TDC allocation up to a full penny.

### **Agenda Item: Business Development**

**Description:** Streamline the process to open a business allowing business owners to invest in our community and reduce burdensome regulations that prevent business owners from upgrading or improving their property.

## County Agenda

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### **Agenda Item: Tourist Development Tax: Preservation**

**Description:** Preserving the Tourist Development Tax for its intended purpose is essential to promote our destination, attract visitors, keep taxes low, enhance quality of life, and support the tourism Industry, Pinellas County's #1 industry. The TBBCoC advocates to keep the 60/40 split as VSPC operations currently exist.

### **Agenda Item: Water Quality**

**Description:** The cleaner our waterways are, the more of an economic impact they generate. Millions of visitors, businesses and residents rely on clean waterways to sustain the quality of life that drew them here. We are seeking a county led approach to keep our agencies in tandem with full county support to continue to invest in water quality.

### **Agenda Item: Workforce Development/Hospitality**

**Description:** An enhanced pool of qualified workers is essential to remain competitive in a changing economy. Pinellas needs to advance economic well-being by developing and maintaining a quality workforce. (Job placement services; CareerSource which includes state)

### **Agenda Item: Beach Renourishment**

**Description:** Beach renourishment is essential for protecting our award-winning beaches and maintaining a strong and prosperous local economy. We stand alongside the county in the efforts to get the Army Corp to change its current policy on easements. Additionally, the TBBCoC encourages the county to approve an increase in the nourishment TDC allocation up to a full penny.

### **Agenda Item: Increase Affordable Housing Supply**

**Description:** This includes preserving existing affordable housing and adding new units. To this end, we support policies that expand the supply of affordable housing options, including streamlining permitting processes and reducing fees for affordable housing construction, expanding public investments to meet the affordable housing need, and increasing funding for public-private partnerships that build affordable homes for low-income families. *\*Text provided by Habitat for Humanity Pinellas/Pasco; TBBCoC supports*

## State Agenda

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### **Agenda Item: Visit Florida**

**Visit Florida:** Support to continue their funding no less than their current funding amounts.

**Description:** According to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, for every \$1 the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA – the official tourism marketing corporation for the state of Florida – \$2.15 in tax revenue is generated. VISIT FLORIDA promotes tourism to Florida through sales, advertising, promotions, public relations and visitor services programs. Each decision the agency has made has been based on financial research that led to record tourism and, more importantly, record spending by visitors. As a public/private partnership, VISIT FLORIDA serves more than 11,000 tourism industry businesses.

### **Agenda Item: Storm Recovery**

**Description:** TBBCOC is advocating for policies that offer relief and long term solutions for our businesses and communities. Pinellas and many parts of our state were impacted greatly by hurricanes Helene and Milton. Powered by its tourism industry, Pinellas County is not positioned to receive the level of visitors that it has in prior years. Additionally, TBBCOC believes the legislature should consider long term solutions to protect coastal communities, assets, and consider how to expedite recovery efforts after future storm events. (See [Addendum](#))

### **Agenda Item: Property Insurance Reform**

**Description:** Though the legislature passed some minor insurance reforms in special sessions. Floridians haven't seen any benefit; they continue to see increases. Floridians need legislation that will combat fraud and increase consumer choice in Florida's property insurance market. Additionally, the legislature must repeal the requirement that if a homeowner is with Citizens Insurance and is NOT in a special flood hazard area they will be required to purchase flood insurance. Finally, this needs to be a level business field. Private insurers must have restrictions on the rates they charge consumers.

### **Agenda Item: Resiliency (Recycling)**

**Description:** In 2008 the legislature passed the Energy, Climate Change, and Economic Security Act that established a weight-based recycling goal of 75% by 2020. This established annual reporting protocols for counties and statewide recycling goals (40% by 2012, 50% by 2014, 60% by 2016, and 70% by 2018). FDEP reported the state met their 2012 and 2014 benchmarks but failed to meet the 60% goal for 2016 and has continued to decline since that time. 2018 recycling rates were reported at 49%. Only four counties met the 70% goal in this time. Much of this was attributed to a reduction in reported construction and demolition debris that is being recycled. Florida is the most prone to the volatility of climate change and the economic impacts that come with it – with that, recycling policies are economic policies.

TBBCoC advocates for the accountability of local governments who have failed to meet these reporting and performance standards; ensuring Florida counties have programs in place to collect and sort recyclable products; study the impact various discarded products have on our air, food, and water supply, as well as the economic benefit to creating a circular economy. This will ultimately impact the cost of goods for citizens and create jobs. (SB36/HB455)

### **Agenda Item: Electric Vehicles**

**Description:** Currently EV buyers do not pay into the gas tax fund. In order to equitably fund our infrastructure of roads this bill proposes that EV buyers pay into this fund so that all vehicles using our roadways pay equitably. (Sponsor: Senator Hooper)

## Federal Agenda

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### **Agenda Item: Beach Renourishment: Army Corps of Engineers**

**Description:** Beach renourishment is essential for protecting our award-winning beaches and maintaining a strong and prosperous local economy. The beaches are essential in our efforts to continue breaking tourism records year over year.

TBBCoC strongly advocates that the Army Corps of Engineers changes its federal policy that currently requires 100% of easements to be signed into perpetuity. These easements should be project based and released once the project is complete.

### **Agenda Item: FEMA Reform**

**Description:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is a cornerstone of disaster response and recovery in the United States. As disasters become more frequent and severe, FEMA's outdated systems and processes are increasingly evident. Recent hurricane events have underscored the challenges, including slow response times, bureaucratic hurdles, and insufficient support for localized recovery efforts. Many of FEMA's procedures are rooted in policies designed for a different era, failing to meet the needs of modern disaster-affected communities.

We are learning from these storms that FEMA's approach does not adequately prioritize immediate relief, long-term recovery, or the capacity-building of local governments and organizations. This inefficiency leaves communities—especially vulnerable ones—struggling to navigate a labyrinth of red tape during their most critical moments. (See [FEMA Strategic Plan](#))

### **Recommendations:**

- Policy Modernization: Update FEMA's operational policies to include stronger emphasis on pre-disaster mitigation and quicker disbursement of aid.
- Streamlined Processes: Reduce bureaucratic hurdles that delay relief, ensuring timely support.
- Local Empowerment: Equip local governments and community organizations with the resources and authority to lead recovery efforts effectively.
- Technology Upgrades: Invest in modern technology to enhance disaster prediction, response coordination, and communication systems.
- Accountability and Transparency: Implement regular audits and assessments to ensure FEMA operates efficiently and equitably.

## Advocacy 101

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In order to truly serve the people they were elected to represent, elected officials need to hear from their constituents about important issues affecting their lives. Personally contacting your elected representatives is one of the most effective ways to get involved in the political process.

### **Make Contact:**

Visit their office  
Send an email  
Make a phone call  
Write a letter to the editor  
Use social media

### **Key Points:**

Make an appointment in advance  
Be polite and be concise  
Stick to the issue at hand  
Leave information behind  
Thank them for their time  
Follow-up after the meeting

### **Resources:**

Chamber Advocacy – [www.TampaBayBeaches.com/Advocacy](http://www.TampaBayBeaches.com/Advocacy)  
Business Assistance – [www.TampaBayBeaches.com/BusinessResource](http://www.TampaBayBeaches.com/BusinessResource)  
Elected Officials – [www.TampaBayBeaches.com/Elected-Officials](http://www.TampaBayBeaches.com/Elected-Officials)  
Florida House of Representatives – [www.MyFloridaHouse.gov](http://www.MyFloridaHouse.gov)  
Florida Senate – [www.FISenate.gov](http://www.FISenate.gov)  
U.S. Congress – [www.Congress.gov](http://www.Congress.gov)