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Senator Gruters and DEP Announce Resiliency Grant Funding to Aid in Development of Collaborative Sarasota County Beach Management Strategy

~$125,000 grant will allow for the first ever sea level rise coastal vulnerability study to inform a cohesive resilience plan~

SARASOTA, Fla. – Today, Senator Joe Gruters joined DEP Secretary Noah Valenstein to celebrate the award of a $125,000 resiliency grant to improve the management of Sarasota County beaches. This funding will aid the development of a comprehensive vulnerability study and subsequent resilience plan that will allow federal, state and local officials to collaboratively and strategically plan for sea level rise along sandy shorelines of Sarasota County.

Sarasota County is home to nearly 35 miles of sandy shorelines, of which 24.2 miles have been designated as critically eroding. The county does not currently have a resilience plan for coastal management that addresses current conditions, existing management strategies and projected sea level rise.

“I am pleased to be here today to celebrate this historic step for beach management in Sarasota County and across our state,” said Senator Gruters. “Beaches are economic drivers for the state and are part of our way of life, and recognizing this, we continue to make restoration of our beaches a priority. It is no surprise that this region will be leading the way in addressing the importance of incorporating sea level rise into our beach management strategy as well as a regional approach to this effort.”

“DEP is proud to be able to provide grant funding to support this important study,” said Secretary Valenstein. “Under the Governor’s leadership, DEP is making it a priority to support our coastal communities in the planning and preparation for the 2 to 3 feet of sea level rise our state is expected to experience by 2060.”

A comprehensive study has never been completed before that focuses specifically on the effects of sea level rise on future coastal management practices. The strategic plan that will be developed with the aid of this state funding, combined with existing coastal management practices, will allow partner agencies to build resilient beach and dune systems that will continue to provide recreational and natural resource benefits to residents and visitors, and reduce flooding and storm erosion damage to upland property. A county-wide resilience plan will also outline roles and responsibilities for the
four main local coastal management sponsors.

About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state’s principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida’s environment and natural resources. The department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida’s air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. Visit the department’s website at https://floridadep.gov/

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