

Hinshaw Successfully Stages Third Annual Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Conference

Press Release | 5 min read

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The national law firm of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, along with conference partners Florida International University's Sea Level Solutions Center (FIU), Urban Land Institute (ULI), and WLRN, recently hosted the Third Annual Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Conference at the Hotel InterContinental Miami on April 4, 2019. The Conference was made possible in part by Platinum sponsors Douglas Elliman Real Estate and *The Miami Herald*; and Corporate sponsors Associated Photo and Imaging; Florida Power & Light Company; Grove Bank & Trust; and Kaufman Rossin.

The event picked up where the 2018 program discussion left off—by driving deeper into issues such as the current status of sea level rise, the economic, legal, and regulatory implications and how Florida is preparing for this imminent threat.

The event was live-tweeted from [Hinshaw's X](#) account, with many in attendance joining the conversation using the event hashtag: [#SeaLevelRise2019](#). A [photo gallery](#) of the event is also available on Hinshaw's Facebook page. Among the more than 250 participants in attendance for this year's conference were members of local, regional, and national media including individuals from the *Daily Business Review*, *Law360*, the *Miami Herald*, *Real Deal Miami*, *WLRN*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Media coverage was provided both before and after the event, including:

- [“What businesses need to know about climate risk and resilience,”](#) *Miami Herald*, June 21, 2019
- [“Climate Experts: Don't Flee Miami, But Do Start Pricing In Risk,”](#) *Bisnow*, April 17, 2019
- [“The Sunshine Economy: A Conversation With Resiliency Leaders,”](#) *WLRN/NPR*, April 10, 2019
- [“Institutional investors are factoring climate change into real estate deals in coastal cities: panel,”](#) *The Real Deal: South Florida Real Estate News*, April 5, 2019
- [“Experts to target strategy on climate, sea level rise,”](#) *Miami Today*, March 28, 2019

Event Overview

Hinshaw's Eliot Abbott and Tom Hudson, Conference Emcee and Vice President of News at *WLRN Miami*, provided welcoming remarks to kick-off the event. Those in attendance heard from leaders from the real estate, finance, and insurance industries, as well as those in those working in academia and government.

Panel Overview

Future-Proofing Real Estate from Climate Risk

Keynote speakers Laura Craft, Head of Global Sustainability at Heitman and Billy Grayson, Executive Director, Center for Sustainability & Economic Performance at ULI, spoke about why climate risks matter for real estate and how climate-risk affects real estate investment strategies.

Fireside Chat: Emergent Climate-Risk Mitigation Strategies

Moderated by Emcee Tom Hudson, Craft and Grayson continued the discussion on mitigation and efforts underway in South Florida. Grayson stated the need to “identify vulnerable areas” and “leverage what is already [being] done.” Craft noted the importance of factoring in the proactive steps cities are taking with regard to infrastructure and sustainability.

Government: Adaptation Do's and Don'ts

The highly anticipated government panel featured The Honorable Dan Gelber, Mayor, City of Miami Beach; Jane Gilbert, Chief Resilience Officer, City of Miami; Dr. Jennifer Jurado, Chief Resilience Officer & Director, Broward County; The Honorable Vince Lago, Vice Mayor, City of Coral Gables; James Murley, Chief Resilience Officer, Miami-Dade County; and Michael Sukop, Ph.D., PG, CHg, Professor, FIU. Topics of discussion included the current state of resilience, the importance of collaboration between cities and future infrastructure needs.

Great discussion this morning on [@Hinshaw #SeaLevelRise2019](#) Govt Panel re how [@MiamiBeachNews](#) approaches resiliency in everything we do. Thx to [@WLRN](#)'s Tom Hudson for moderating & to [@Vince Lago](#) & our other panel members from [@FIU](#), [@BrowardCounty](#) & [@MiamiDadeCounty #MBRisingAbove](#) pic.twitter.com/bmGOBibMOw — Dan Gelber (@MayorDanGelber) April 4, 2019

Insurance: Transferring and Assessing Risk

Attendees heard from Angela H. A'Zary, Vice President, Client Risk Analytics, RenaissanceRE; Walter Meyer, Principal, Local Office Landscape Architecture; Tiffany Troxler, Director of Science, Sea Level Solutions Center, FIU; and Nancy Watkins, Principal & Consulting Actuary, Milliman. Moderated by Hinshaw Partner Kristina Marsh, panelists addressed the risks associated with sea level rise and climate change, the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) new rate restructuring, private flood insurance, parametric insurance and the positive impact of nature-based infrastructure.

Real Estate: Scalable Solutions to Sustainability

After the lunch and networking break, Ana C. Benatuil, Associate, Gensler Architects; Terry Hull, Associate Vice President, Dewberry; David Martin, President and Co-Founder, Terra Group; Patrick Murphy, Executive Vice President, Coastal Construction; and Jay Phillip Parker, CEO of Florida Brokerage, Douglas Elliman Real Estate, came together for the real estate panel. Hinshaw Partner Steve Cronig served as a moderator. Discussion points included future real estate development, remediation efforts, and collaboration between the private sector and government.

Now live: David Martin [@TerraGroupMiami](#), [@GenslerOnCities](#), [@PatrickMurphyFL](#) [@Coastal_Const](#), Terry Hull [@TheDewberryWay](#), and Jay Phillip Parker [@DouglasElliman](#) explore real estate sustainability solutions | [@Hinshaw's Steve Cronig moderating #SeaLevelRise2019](#) pic.twitter.com/dnUdD8bqHf
— Hinshaw & Culbertson (@hinshaw) [April 4, 2019](#)

Finance: The Challenges of Investing in Resilience

Jessica Elengical, Global Head of ESG Strategy for Alternatives, DWS Group; Amy Knowles, Deputy Resilience Officer, City of Miami Beach; and Devesh Nirmul, Vice President, Counterpointe Sustainable Real Estate provided insights on climate-risk modeling, ROIs to date on resilience efforts and the use of PACE funding. Hinshaw Partner Tony Jacob moderated the panel.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The final panel of the event featured Linda Cheung, Founder and CEO, Before It's Too Late (Miami Murals); Evelyn E. Gaiser, Professor, Department of Biological Sciences and Institute of Water & Environment, FIU; Jenny Staletovich, Environmental Reporter, formerly *The Miami Herald* now *WLRN*; and Hinshaw's Thomas Lupo and Harvey Sheldon. Moderated by Tom Hudson, panelists covered a wide-range of topics, including discussions about climate action, federal legislation, future zoning, Florida's first Chief Science Officer, and what Governor DeSantis is doing to address water conservation.

Linda Cheung of [@bitl_earth](#), [@FIUSeaLevel](#), [@jenstaletovich](#) frmly of [@MiamiHerald](#) now at [@WLRN](#), and [@Hinshaw](#)'s Harvey Sheldon and Thomas Lupo have the final word at [#SeaLevelRise2019](#) discussing "Where do we go from here?"
— Hinshaw & Culbertson (@hinshaw) [April 4, 2019](#)

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