

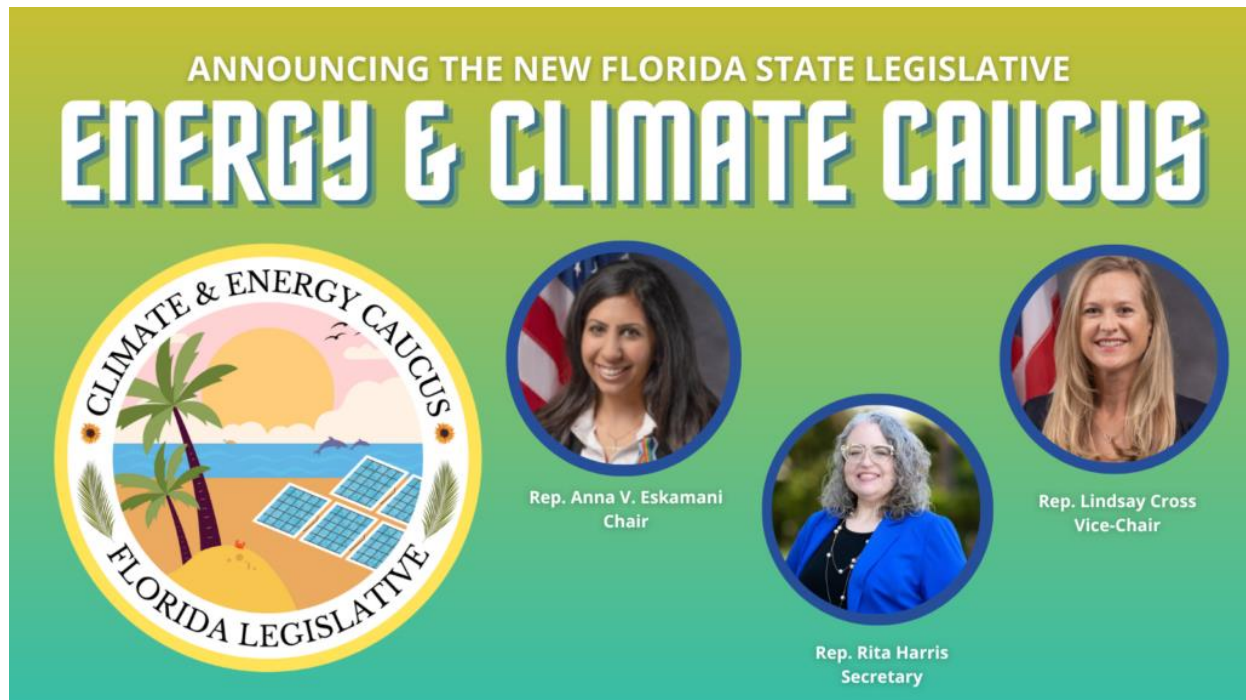
Representative Anna V. Eskamani Announces Launch of the Energy and Climate Caucus in the Florida Legislature

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A new coalition of Florida lawmakers is banding together to pursue policies that combat climate change, reduce fossil-fuel dependence, and promote clean-energy technologies in a state that is uniquely vulnerable to the catastrophic impacts of hotter temperatures and higher sea levels.

Orlando, Fla. – Representative Anna V. Eskamani today announced the launch of the “Energy and Climate Caucus” within the Florida Legislature, a coalition of state lawmakers who will advocate for policies that combat climate change, reduce fossil-fuel dependence, and promote clean-energy production.



Climate change poses a potentially existential threat to the world – and especially so in Florida, a low-lying peninsula surrounded on three sides by water and regularly struck by hurricanes. So members of the Energy and Climate Caucus are now banding together to ensure that our climate emergency does not continue to go ignored and unaddressed by Florida’s elected leaders.

The Caucus held its first meeting this week, in which caucus members approved bylaws and elected board members. Representative Anna V. Eskamani will serve as Chair, Representative Lindsay Cross as Vice Chair, and Representative Rita Harris as Secretary.

The caucus has five primary purposes: To promote the knowledge and understanding of climate change and energy policy within the Florida Legislature; to advocate for action on climate change and increased clean-energy production; to organize and host meetings bringing together elected

officials with policy and industry experts; to inform and influence the state's elected and appointed officials on climate change and clean-energy technologies; and to pursue specific state legislation to combat climate change and curb Florida's heavy reliance on fossil fuels.

"According to NASA, Planet Earth has already warmed by about 2 degrees Fahrenheit since the late 1800s," said Representative Anna V. Eskamani. "And global temperatures are expected to climb another 5 degrees by 2100 unless policies change to combat manmade causes of climate change – particularly burning of fossil-fuel energy sources like coal, oil and natural gas — are championed. As the Sunshine State, I know Florida can be that leader."

Hotter temperatures lead to rising oceans, as glaciers and ice sheets melt and warm water expands. Sea levels along the U.S. coastline have risen about 12 inches over the past 100 years, [according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#). And they are expected to rise an additional 10-12 inches over the next 30 years.

The combined effects will be catastrophic, from [more intense heat waves and longer droughts](#) to [stronger, wetter and more-rapidly intensifying hurricanes and farther-reaching storm surge and flooding](#).

"It is past time that Florida's legislative leaders addressed climate change like the urgent crisis that it is," added Representative Cross. "To protect the state we love, we must aggressively address the causes of climate change and promote greener and more resilient measures. Future generations are looking to us to provide a livable and vibrant Florida. This caucus represents a place for dialogue, to bring forward the priorities from the people, and protect our beautiful natural environment. I am proud to serve as the Vice Chair and to work with other leaders and advocates to advance important climate legislation."

Floridians are already feeling the effects of hurricane change, from ["sunny-day flooding"](#) in Miami that can make roads impassable to the widespread devastation caused last year by Hurricane Ian, the deadliest hurricane to strike our state in more than 80 years. One preliminary study found that human-caused climate change [increased Ian's rainfall total by 10 percent](#).

Climate change is already contributing to Florida's affordability crisis too: Executives at some of the world's largest insurance and reinsurance companies say that climate change – and the more frequent and extreme natural disasters it causes – is one of the factors [driving giant rate hikes for homeowner's insurance](#).

And yet, Florida remains dangerously dependent on fossil fuels. For instance, the state's largest electric company, Florida Power & Light, generates [approximately 70 percent of its power from natural gas](#).

"I am looking forward to being a part of this caucus," added Representative Harris. "Florida is uniquely positioned to be impacted by climate change. It's incumbent upon each of us to do what we can to preserve Florida's natural resources and environment. We have Shingle Creek, the headwaters of the Everglades, in District 44 and constituents are keen to protect those wetlands. I am honored and grateful to do this work."

The Caucus will be releasing their 2023 calendar of events and topics soon.

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