FROM THE OFFICE OF
GOVERNOR
RON DESANTIS
@GOVRONDESANTIS | WWW.FLGOV.COM | 850-717-9282 | MEDIA@EOG.MYFLORIDA.COM

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Contact: Governor’s Press Office, (850) 717-9282, Communications@eog.myflorida.com

Governor DeSantis Signs Consumer Protection Legislation to Support Florida Policyholders When Disaster Strikes

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Today, Governor DeSantis signed three bills that strengthen Florida’s property insurance market, expand the state’s home hardening and hazard mitigation programs, and further protect consumers against bad actors. These actions build on the Governor’s strong record of instituting meaningful reforms to Florida’s property insurance market. Additionally, Governor DeSantis is announcing the approval of an additional $100 million in the 2023–24 General Appropriations Act for the My Safe Florida Home Program which provides grants to Florida homeowners for hurricane retrofitting, making homes safer and more resistant to hurricane damage and bringing the state’s combined investment to $250 million over the past year.

“Since taking office, Florida has instituted a series of reforms to increase consumer choice and accountability in our insurance market,” **said Governor Ron DeSantis.** “The bills I’ve signed today reinforce our commitment to Florida policyholders by investing in hazard mitigation programs and instituting a series of accountability measures that protect consumers from predatory insurer practices.”

“Under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, over the last several years, during regular and special sessions, we have worked on reforms to strengthen the property insurance market in our state so policyholders have access to quality, affordable, private market property insurance,” **said Senate President Kathleen Passidomo.** “Ultimately, every homeowner needs property insurance that is reliable and affordable. When disaster strikes, we want to make sure impacted Floridians can successfully navigate the claims process and be compensated for losses in a timely manner. SB 7052 continues our efforts to balance fair costs and protections for consumers, while strengthening state review and analysis of the insurance market so that bad actors can be held accountable. I commend the team effort on this legislation, bringing stakeholders together to put forward a strong and meaningful insurer accountability package that enhances consumer-friendly provisions of current law and increases transparency between homeowners and insurance companies.”

"The insurance legislation signed by Governor DeSantis today increases accountability of insurers and transparency in the marketplace," **said House Speaker Paul Renner**. "It not only empowers homeowners but also cultivates market-driven competition, ultimately leading to lower costs. By establishing clear standards, fostering consumer trust, and promoting fair practices, we can pave the way for a resilient and affordable insurance landscape that benefits homeowners and their communities."

“Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature continue to demonstrate their commitment to Florida’s policyholders, and I thank them for their leadership on this legislation,” **said Insurance Commissioner Michael Yaworsky**. “As we work to implement the legislation signed today, the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) will continue to support both a competitive market and ensure that when a bad actor is identified, we utilize the full extent of our regulatory authority to ensure policyholders are protected.”

Senate Bill 7052, signed by the Governor today, enacts several consumer protection measures that further increase competition and accountability in Florida’s property insurance market by:

- Clarifying that once a roof deductible is applied, no other deductible under the policy may be applied to any loss caused by the same covered peril.
- Tolling the time period for an individual deployed to a combat zone or combat support posting to file a property insurance claim for the duration of the deployment.
- Requiring property insurance mitigation discounts be updated at least every five years and requiring insurers to provide consumer-friendly information on their website describing hurricane mitigation discounts available to policyholders.
- Requiring liability insurers to follow proper claims handling practices on behalf of their policyholders and increasing penalties for insurers who don’t.
- Prohibiting any altering or amending of an adjuster’s report without providing a detailed explanation for any reduction of the estimate of the loss.
- Prohibiting officers and directors of impaired or insolvent insurers from receiving a bonus.
- Increasing the maximum administrative fines that may be levied by the OIR on insurance companies by 250 percent generally, and 500 percent for violations stemming from a state of emergency such as a hurricane.

The Governor also signed HB 799 related to property insurance. The bill expands mitigation discount programs for policyholders by:

- Requiring a property insurer’s residential rate filing to allow for mitigation discounts which reduce the potential for windstorm losses.
- Requiring residential property insurers to provide reasonable discount, credit, or appropriate reduction in deductibles for wind uplift prevention measures as a part of their rate filings.
- Clarifying provisions included in Senate Bill 2A related to Citizen’s Property Insurance Corporation flood insurance coverage requirements.

HB 881, signed by the Governor today, expands eligibility for the My Safe Florida Home Program, ensuring more Floridians can participate. The program was first included in Senate Bill 2D signed by the Governor last year, and upgrades funded through the program can result in premium discounts for program participants.

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