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PRESS RELEASE

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Miami Beach Goes Above and Beyond in its Water Monitoring Program

— Proactively Launching Municipal Water Quality Program with No Major Issues Identified in First Year—

Miami Beach, FL –To monitor the health of Miami Beach waterways and better inform stormwater management decisions, the City voluntarily launched a water quality sampling program in late 2016 that expands upon Miami-Dade County’s existing sampling network. The program added more than 60 sampling points throughout Miami Beach that build upon the nearly 90 stations countywide and provided a more robust snapshot of local water quality.

Upon completion of the first year of sampling, the City retained a third-party water quality expert, Dr. Charles Rowney, to analyze the data collected by the City’s sampling program and evaluate the program design. Dr. Rowney has over 35 years of experience in assessing, implementing, and interpreting water quality programs.

“In my view, the monitoring program launched by the City has been highly productive,” noted Dr. Rowney. “It has not only provided immediate value by generating new data, but it has shed light on a number of factors of importance in effectively monitoring and managing this system. The foundation of understanding developed in year one has the potential to materially benefit water quality management efforts going forward, by guiding future monitoring activity towards even better outcomes, leading to a better understanding of factors affecting water quality and ultimately to implementation of the best protective measures possible.”

At a technical water quality discussion held this week with representatives from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami and other regional stakeholders, Dr. Rowney shared his findings. Based on his analysis of the Miami Beach water quality sampling program and the data collected during the monitoring period, there is no indication of gross or persistent sanitary system contamination into Biscayne Bay from Miami Beach.

“The bottom line is that after carefully evaluating 62 strategic locations – no major discharges from our sanitary system were detected in the waters of the Bay adjacent to Miami Beach. We will continue to be extremely proactive in our environmental monitoring and do what is best for our community and natural ecosystem,” stated Commissioner John Elizabeth Alemán.

As the Miami Beach water quality monitoring program nears the completion of its second year, it will continue to serve as a useful screening level program for early detection of major or potentially chronic water quality concerns that could impact Biscayne Bay so the City can address them swiftly.

“We are excited that we were able to set an example by launching one of the only municipal water quality sampling programs in the region,” explained Assistant Director of Environment and Sustainability Margarita Wells. “The program is crucial in ensuring that our decisions are data-driven.”

While at this time no major issues have been identified, the City is consistently evaluating its stormwater management program to go above and beyond in protecting this regional resource.

“As the Director of Public Works, I have no greater responsibility than protecting public health and safety by operating the wastewater and stormwater systems appropriately,” expressed Director of Public Works Roy Coley. “What Dr. Rowney’s report has confirmed is that the City of Miami Beach does not have systematic issues with sewerage being discharged into Biscayne Bay.”

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