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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 13, 2021

Miami Beach Commission Adopts First Seawall Ordinance of its Kind

— *The measure sets minimum construction standards for seawalls and other tidal flood barriers in Miami Beach* —

Miami Beach, FL – The Miami Beach City Commission unanimously adopted an ordinance today that codifies previously established minimum elevations for new seawalls and provides new penalties for property owners who fail to maintain privately owned seawalls that cause flooding on adjacent properties and the rights of way.

Titled “Resiliency Standards for Tidal Flood Protection,” the measure sets minimum construction standards for seawalls and other tidal flood barriers to strengthen coastal resilience and mitigate the effects of tidal flooding. The ordinance gives property owners up to 730 days to bring failing seawalls into compliance.

“Miami Beach has approximately 53 miles of seawalls, of which 92% are on private property,” Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber explained. “Our city must have a mechanism in place to make sure that our seawalls are a protective coastal barrier now and well into the future to reduce risks from storms, high tides and sea level rise.”

The Miami Beach ordinance was modeled after seawall ordinances recently adopted by Broward County and the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Under the new ordinance, all new seawalls must be constructed to a minimum elevation of 5.7 feet NAVD or 4 feet NAVD if designed to support a future elevation of 5.7 feet NAVD. Nearly 40% of Miami Beach residents reported having observed increased flooding in their neighborhoods during a 2019 community satisfaction survey.

“The City of Miami Beach is investing in aging infrastructure to reduce food risk and adapt to climate change,” Commissioner Mark Samuelian added. “Investments in resilience make strong economic sense for residents and the community alike.”

Seawall replacement requires permitting approvals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, State of Florida, the Miami-Dade County Resources and Regulatory Department and the City of Miami Beach. Seawalls must be upgraded if the property undergoes new construction or substantial improvements.

A violation of the ordinance carries a \$250 fine per day for the first offense and a \$500 fine per day for subsequent violations.

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