

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

STATEWIDE SYMPOSIUM ON REGIONAL COOPERATION:
OPENING ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR JEB BUSH

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PROCEEDINGS

GOV. BUSH: Thank you, Peter. Good morning, everybody.
Happy St. Patrick's Day.

To our guests from Georgia, it is a delight to have you here. I was in Georgia for a Medicaid Commission two days this week. And for all those that are worried about where the lines from I-95 went, they are all up in Georgia, all up in Atlanta. You must have had some really powerful senators a long time ago when they were building the interstate system.

But it is a joy to have you all here, wherever you are. I hope you are here. And we appreciate the fact that you are spending your hard earned Georgia money in Florida, in one of our largest industries, which is the visitors industry.

By the way, it's why we don't have an income tax, so spend away!

(Laughter.)

GOV. BUSH: Enjoy South Beach while you're here. It is a pleasure to talk about something of real relevance and real importance to this dynamic state that we love, our beloved Florida. Florida is a state that is moving three steps forward, one step back, ten steps forward, seven steps back. We are not like a lot of states that are just kind of incrementally moving along. Florida is the most dynamic state of all the 50 states. We have a population that is fast-growing, as we all know, and it is growing at a

1 rate that causes some concern.

2 But if you look at our growth numbers and the dynamic nature
3 of Florida, the net numbers don't really tell the whole story. I think this year
4 we will have about 380,000 extra people, net new people in the State of
5 Florida. That's more than any state in the country.

6 What's interesting about that is we have the highest death rate,
7 because we are blessed with a large elderly population that adds a vitality to
8 our state.

9 We have a high birth rate, because we are a dynamic place
10 where people are coming from all over the world to pursue their dreams.
11 Young families bring babies into the world. We have the highest by far
12 number of people moving into our state, far more than that net 380,000, and
13 we have the third highest number of people moving out.

14 It's an interesting dynamic that is really not shared in public
15 policy. It's not discussed that much. But that dynamic nature creates huge
16 opportunities and it creates some real challenges as it relates to how do you
17 create a shared vision for regionalism, how do you create a consensus in
18 the political realm, because people are from all over, and they are not
19 necessarily tethered down with a vision together as citizens in this state.

20 But the fact is we know we are going to grow. All of this
21 dynamic interchanging and moving in and out defines us. And we better get
22 used to it. We better start figuring out ways to begin to solve problems and

1 take advantage of opportunities, recognizing that Florida is unique in that
2 regard.

3 By the year 2020 Florida will have 22 million people living here.
4 We will be the third largest state, and we will continue to grow, by all
5 accounts. I have not seen a single estimation of a slowdown of that growth.

6
7 The tremendous growth presents challenges as well as
8 opportunities. We need to protect and preserve the incredible quality of life
9 that draws people to Florida, and makes it so appealing. We need to protect
10 our business climate so that we can have a sustainable economic situation
11 for the folks that are moving here. We need to continue to strengthen and
12 diversify our economy. Florida leads the nation in job growth by far.

13 I mean, way ahead of the rest of the country. Some 15 percent
14 of all the net new jobs in the last seven years have been created in Florida.
15 Fifteen percent of all the jobs in the United States have been created in
16 Florida. Our population is about 4 or 5 percent of the entire country, so you
17 can see that we are growing at a rate that is three times more than the
18 national average.

19 And we need to recognize that in order to continue to grow, we
20 need to figure out ways to make that growth a different kind of growth, a
21 growth that is creating higher wages, creating more money for people's
22 dreams to come true.

1 And so I think this idea of regionalism, how we organize
2 ourselves in these dynamic regions that are emerging in our state is the
3 great catalyst for taking advantage of the opportunities that exist in Florida.

4 Clearly, in Florida our regions are different. A group of us just
5 flew down from Tallahassee, where Peter's got a little bit of an operation,
6 just west of there. Northwest Florida is a lot different than my hometown of
7 Miami. Tampa and the Tampa Bay area is certainly different than
8 Jacksonville. Southwest Florida is incredibly beautiful and very different
9 than, say, Orlando. These regions that are emerging are our lifeblood, and
10 the fact that they are diverse, I think, gives us an added advantage in a very
11 competitive world.

12 Our state has come a long way in meeting the challenges of
13 unprecedented growth. Last June, I proudly signed the most significant
14 reform in our growth management laws since the first growth management
15 legislation was passed nearly two decades ago.

16 The pay-as-you-grow plan ensures communities build the
17 critical infrastructure needed to meet the growing needs of towns and cities
18 and regions. To approve each new development, counties are required to
19 provide roads and schools within three years of the expected growth, and
20 water supply by the time people move into their homes.

21 Now, that may sound like a commonsense thing. But prior to
22 the passage of this law, that was not what was happening in Florida. In

1 spite of the best of intentions, and the intentions certainly were noble of the
2 1986, I think, or 1985, law, the loopholes in those laws were so significant
3 that basically development ran totally uncoordinated with the infrastructure
4 necessary to fill the demands that were created. And we have begun to see
5 deterioration in many places. The threat of deteriorated quality of life
6 because we had not made the public infrastructure commitment to deal with
7 the demands that are created by our growth.

8 This growth management law, while not perfect, I think is a
9 major, significant step towards tying the supply that is created, by the
10 demand that is created by new houses and new developments to make sure
11 that, concurrent with that, there is a commitment to infrastructure.

12 And I am proud of the fact that both the growth management
13 law that focused more on schools and roads and its cousin legislation that
14 related to alternative water supply, was passed last year, and it was backed
15 up by significant sums of state money, \$1.5 billion of new general revenue
16 dollars that went into infrastructure last year, and \$750 million -- off the top
17 of our budget process, by the way -- taken off the top, \$750 million for ten
18 years that will be coming in creative ways to create partnerships with local
19 communities and regions in our state, to be able to begin the process of
20 investing heavily in our infrastructure.

21 And perhaps for the first time, actually having this symmetry
22 that is necessary for us to have sustainable communities.

1 Perhaps no other place is our growth so obvious than
2 transportation. I try to come to Miami on the weekends. So I like to find
3 ways to -- thank you for having this speaking engagement on a Friday, by
4 the way.

5 (Laughter.)

6 GOV. BUSH: I come home as much as I can, and I try to work
7 on Fridays and Mondays in South Florida. And if you live in Tallahassee,
8 people complain about not having to go through -- if it takes maybe one time
9 in my entire tenure as governor, have I had to wait at a light for one rotation.

10

11 (Laughter.)

12 GOV. BUSH: That's a huge deal in Tallahassee. People get
13 very annoyed by that. And then, on Friday afternoons when I come home
14 after finishing work, I try to go from, say, the University of Miami office that
15 we have to the condo that we have on U.S. 1, I can walk there in ten
16 minutes. To drive, it takes 30 minutes! The traffic is incredible. And it's not
17 just in Miami. It's throughout the major burgeoning urban areas of our state.

18

19 And so clearly transportation and congestion is a huge issue for
20 our state. Our small roadways that were originally built to get us to school,
21 to work, to the grocery store, now are major transportation arteries for the
22 delivery of goods and services to emerging areas and distribution centers.

1 Our lifeblood depends on our transportation corridors. And every day we
2 are confronted with this rapid growth pushing our transportation corridors to
3 their capacity.

4 These transportation corridors extend beyond municipalities
5 and county lines. For the folks that are living in Weston that work in
6 downtown Miami, or vice versa, they don't feel any better when they cross
7 the line. This is clearly a regional challenge, and regional solutions are the
8 answer to the challenges that we face with congestion.

9 This is also a huge quality of life issue that is not just a Florida
10 issue. It is certainly an issue that is being dealt with all across the country.

11 To promote a regional approach to improving our transportation
12 system, we are providing more than \$2 billion over six years, including a
13 billion dollars of state money, that will be matched with, potentially, local,
14 regional, private and hopefully federal partners, to be able to create the
15 Transportation Regional Incentive Program. That's an acronym, by the way,
16 appropriately called "TRIP."

17 TRIP is designed to encourage regional partnerships to improve
18 significant transportation facilities around the state, keeping our economy
19 growing and our traffic moving. The Department of Transportation will pay
20 50 percent of the project costs, up to 50 percent of the non-federal share, of
21 project costs for public transportation facility projects. And Secretary Stutler
22 is here. I think he will be part of this forum afterwards, and he can talk

1 specifically about what's happening.

2 But here in South Florida, for the first time, there is
3 unprecedented cooperation through an agreement between Dade, Broward
4 and Palm Beach to work regional transportation issues together in
5 partnership and with state money, for the first time. And so I am very
6 optimistic that this new approach will yield a far better result than what we
7 had.

8 It's not just in South Florida that this is taking place, by the way.
9 It's also occurring in Lee County, with the Three Oaks Parkway, County
10 Road 209 in Clay County, Wonderwood-Jacksonville, Alafaya Trail, the
11 Innovation Way, where we have great challenges of protecting the
12 environment but also meeting the growth needs of Central Florida.

13 This unprecedented cooperation and regional approach to
14 dealing with transportation projects is the way to go. And, when you back it
15 up with money, it makes it a little bit easier to have to deal with the
16 challenges of -- Commissioner Sorenson has enough challenge dealing with
17 her fellow county commissioners in Miami-Dade to then ask a county
18 commissioner who is interested in transportation to also have to deal with
19 the Broward County Commission and the Palm Beach County Commission,
20 is a challenge indeed.

21 So, providing incentives with a little extra love in the form of
22 money probably makes it a little bit easier for the regionalism to occur.

1 The other thing that we are doing at the state level that I think is
2 critical was based on recommendations that were given to us over in the
3 2025 Florida Transportation Plan, was to figure out where the growth trends
4 in our state should be, where they will be, and plan for them.

5 Now, I know that sounds like a radical idea that people actually
6 would be focused on something that might happen 20 years from now,
7 rather than the hear and now. And the pressures in the legislative process
8 and politics in general, is to stay focused on the present. But in a state like
9 Florida, we will define our future by our inaction as much as by our own
10 actions.

11 And so, under the leadership, again, of Secretary Stutler, and I
12 am sure he will talk about this, we are identifying transportation corridors
13 throughout the state where we anticipate, and where we know, growth will
14 take place. The hope is that we will not have to react after the fact, after the
15 growth has already taken place and say, oh my gosh, what are we going to
16 do now. That's a common -- sometimes you don't use "gosh," I guess -- but
17 that is a common problem in public life. And I am confident that the next
18 governor and the next secretary of transportation will be able to continue this
19 focus on advanced planning.

20 The second big issue in regionalism and in our future as a state
21 is water. Our friends from Atlanta are here and I have to make one
22 reference to this, because they need to work on this, too, by the way.

1 (Laughter.)

2 GOV. BUSH: Because they are taking our water from
3 Apalachicola Bay! And the growth of Atlanta has created significant strains -
4 - regionalism also crosses state lines, I guess, is the plight of what I am
5 saying. And I am hoping we can work together to advance this cause of
6 alternative sources of water supply throughout the region, not just in our own
7 state.

8 The unprecedented growth of Florida, though, has created
9 significant strains on our water supply. The old days, the old ways, was to
10 simply punch a hole in the ground and take groundwater out and be done
11 with it. And the laws of economics, the lowest cost source of water was --
12 obviously, the place that people would go.

13 And, in fact, in many cases, there was not even a dedicated
14 source of water that would be matched with the growth. Miami-Dade County
15 could say we have a source of water, and that source of water could be the
16 exact same source of water that other municipalities in Dade County or
17 perhaps even in the region would identify. Those days are gone. No longer
18 is that appropriate or possible in our state.

19 Perhaps more than any other aspects of the laws that were
20 changed last year, this is the one where the rubber will meet the road. And I
21 am proud of the fact that under the leadership of Senator Paula Dockery, I
22 signed this bill into law, that will require advance planning, on a regional

1 basis, for alternative water sources supply.

2 If we do not do this, we will damage the golden goose that lays
3 the golden egg. The reason why we are the fastest growing part of the
4 United States, the reason why we lead the nation in job growth, is that
5 people like to work where they like to live. People like to live here because
6 of its incredible beauty. And I say "here" as all across Florida.

7 So the days of just degrading the natural environment because
8 it was the cheapest source of water supply for our communities are gone.
9 And no place perhaps more than Miami-Dade is this going to be a challenge.
10 And I want to discuss a little bit about how these challenges will play out
11 throughout the state, but use Miami-Dade perhaps as an example.

12 Miami-Dade has grown to a community of 2.3 million people, at
13 last count. It is not as fast-growing percentage-wise, but it is the largest
14 county in our state. And it continues to grow. The county is also the single
15 largest user of fresh water in Florida, each day consuming 350 million
16 gallons of fresh water. Three hundred and fifty million gallons of water. It
17 disposes most of its 290 million gallons of waste water in the ocean, or
18 thousands of feet below ground. Only 5 percent of the county's waste water
19 is recycled, which is, by the way, for a major metropolitan area, one of the
20 lowest rates of reuse in the nation.

21 This is made more important because the state is investing \$3.2
22 billion through the end of the decade, by the way, at an accelerated rate

1 than what we committed to, with our federal partners, including \$1.8 billion
2 already spent, to restore America's Everglades, just to the west of this
3 wonderful community. It is the largest environmental restoration project of
4 its kind in the history of the United States. The restoration will save the
5 habitat for more than 60 endangered species, and replenish the
6 underground water supply for millions of South Floridians.

7 But people in communities need to do their part. Miami and the
8 South Florida region have always been an economic pillar. But that is now
9 challenged because there has not been this commitment to investment in
10 infrastructure.

11 And, from my perspective, it makes no sense to continue to
12 develop westward and westward and westward without any commitment to
13 assure that there is adequate water supply and the only way that water
14 supply will take place --

15 (Applause.)

16 GOV. BUSH: This is controversial. Not big applause on this. I
17 realize this. But the only way that we can develop that water supply is
18 through alternative means. The world has changed. And so it is important
19 for us to recognize that and not be so naïve to think that we can continue to
20 do the same things over and over again and expect a result that does not
21 degrade the natural environment, and hurt our sustainability.

22 Why is this important? This is a long term economic

1 development issue for our state. We have to recognize that the cost of
2 infrastructure for our growth is going up. And so, therefore, what do we do?

3
4 Well, we have to have the regional approach to these things.
5 We have to have meaningful growth management reform. And we have to
6 have a significant strategy to expand economic opportunities towards higher
7 wage jobs. The combination of all of that, I think, is where Florida's vision
8 and where Florida's future lies. So this year, apart from the fact that we will
9 stay the course on growth management, we will continue to partners for
10 regional solutions for water capacity and transportation solutions. I have
11 asked the Florida legislature to invest \$630 million to fund an economic
12 development strategy to place Florida in the forefront of the innovation
13 economy; \$630 million of onetime monies will yield, in my opinion, over the
14 long haul, significant benefits to our state. It will include \$100 million for a
15 world class scholars program. Eminent scholars that we can recruit from
16 other parts of the world, including the United States, and their labs, and their
17 assistance so that our universities expand their research and development
18 capabilities, the spin-offs of which will yield high wage jobs for the future.

19 Two hundred and fifty million dollars to attract additional
20 research capacity, like SCRIPs (phonetic), and these one of a kind
21 economic development opportunities that we have to compete with states
22 that are very aggressive, like Georgia, that are very aggressive in the

1 economic development world.

2 We need those resources to be able to attract these high wage
3 jobs that act then as a catalyst for the expansion of high wage jobs in our
4 communities.

5 Seventy-five million dollars for venture capital, because as our
6 research is developed at our universities, what we are finding is that many
7 times they are commercialized in other parts of the country, because the
8 venture capitalists don't live here, and their capital needs to be closer to
9 where they are because they not only provide capital, but they provide
10 management advice.

11 A \$50 million closing fund, so that we can make sure that we
12 can compete, as our costs rise, which they have. We are now threatened to
13 lose high wage jobs in our state, and the \$50 million closing fund, when
14 used appropriately, will be very helpful for us to remain competitive.

15 I see these two issues as the intersection for the future of
16 Florida. I see this commitment to build a world class business climate and
17 focus on economic development in partnership with regional solutions to our
18 growth. If we do both of these right, then the next generation of Floridians
19 will have more opportunities. They will have more chances to pursue their
20 dreams in this beloved state of ours than we did.

21 And for the folks that are interested in building stronger
22 communities, that probably is the goal. I would hope it is, that we create a

