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The Briefing for October 18, 2024

*Note – From the North Atlantic – five more days to reach our destination. Then Home!
The Last Briefing was October 6, 2024*

Link to Week 8 of the College Football Season

<i>FSU at Duke</i>	<i>Kentucky at Florida</i>
<i>UAB at USF</i>	<i>Miam at Louisville</i>
<i>FAU at UTSA</i>	<i>UCF at Iowa State</i>

Hurricane Milton

Here are some important links for information stay up to speed -

Link to State Division of Emergency Management Website
Link to Florida Association of Counties Disaster Resources Website

Legislative Issues

Developing Legislative Priorities for 2025 Legislative Consideration

We are currently in the process of developing the 2025 Legislative Priorities for the Small County Coalition and the Small School District Council Consortium. We are using the 2024 programs as a base document and are including other priorities that continue to be important to the small counties and small school districts. A request has been sent to various organizations requesting that as they complete their legislative programs that the list be sent to my office to ensure that relevant issues can be included in the updated programs for 2025. Listed below are some of the items that will be included in some fashion into the 2025 document. Complete proposal will be submitted to the Small County Coalition and the SSDCC in December at the statewide legislative meetings.

Small County Coalition Issues

- **Increase funding for Small County Road Programs**
- **Supplemental Distribution Full Funding**
- **Fiscally Constrained Counties Distribution Issue**
- **Solar Farms** – Revise the statute to give local governments additional involvement in the permitting process.
- **Statewide Water Resources** – SUPPORT creation of a five-year water- statewide strategic and related work plan. SUPPORT increased funding for local water infrastructure projects with direction for


coordination of the various state/regional entities funding water issues toward local priorities, including - funding for conversion programs designed to move private wells to potable drinking water and private septic tanks to public wastewater collection systems. SUPPORT greater flexibility for programs that address the costs incurred by residents connecting to sewer and the proper abandonment of septic systems.

- **Expand availability to levy additional Small County Surtax**—allow fiscally constrained counties to place a referendum on the ballot for voters to determine whether or not that County can levy the Small County Surtax at a combined rate up to 2% in combination with the levy of the Local Government Infrastructure Surtax.
- **State Funding to Offset Property Tax Refunds for Hurricane** - SUPPORT state funding to offset property tax refunds required under S.197.319
- **Volunteer Firefighter** – support providing state incentives for completion of certification requirements in fiscally constrained counties.

Small School District Issues

- **Providing Flexibility in the School Start Time Mandate** – current statutes require later start times in all counties with High Schools not starting before 8:30am. We request that the legislature provide flexibility or waiver for those districts where these times are problematic.
- **Offset impact of Sharing 1.5 millage revenues** with Charter Schools in fiscally constrained counties with a special appropriation equivalent to the amount of revenue transferred.
- **Acceleration Issue**
 - **Revise Middle School Acceleration** that Students who earn three or more digital tools certificates while in middle school will be considered middle school accelerated.
 - **College & Career Acceleration** – Create a path for students with a disability who is eligible to receive a waiver of state assessments is removed from the denominator when calculating College and Career Acceleration. Or -Create a pathway for students with disabilities participating in 200 plus hours of a work-based learning experience to be college and career accelerated.
- **Funding for the Special Facility Construction Account Program**
- **Provide a substantial increase in funding to the School Transportation Formula**
- **Support the Regional Education Consortia Program**

Other News

Hurricane Damage to Agriculture Soars - Based on initial reporting and communication with farmers, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' [initial damage assessment](#) [ 1.4 MB

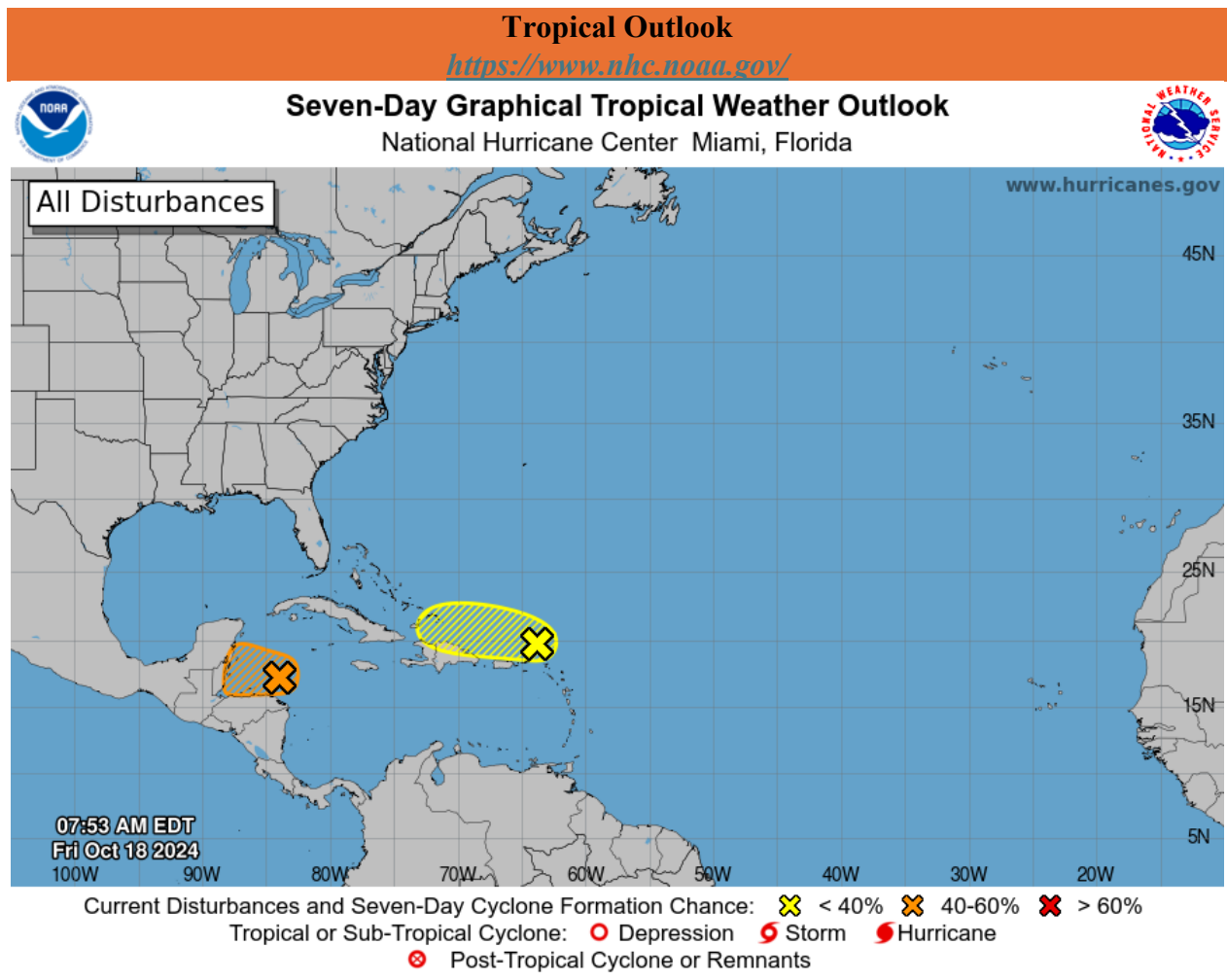
] estimates total losses to the agriculture industry between \$1.5 billion and \$2.5 billion. The State Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is estimating that damages to farmers and ranchers from Hurricane Milton may double the statewide agricultural destruction from three other storms that pummeled Florida since August 2023. Ag. Commissioner Wilton Simpson is estimating that Milton caused between \$1.5 billion and \$2.5 billion, on top of more than \$1.5 billion in damages already sustained from hurricanes Idalia, Debby and Helene. Preliminary estimates from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services found Milton impacted 51 counties. The state agency's report found major structural impacts to nurseries and cattle ranches, while power outages caused disruptions to cow-milking operations. Cotton, peanut and rice crops suffered "minor to catastrophic" damages. Vegetables, melons, blueberries, strawberries, and tropical fruits experienced "significant damages," according to the report.

State Jobless Rate holds at 3.3%- Florida's unemployment rate held for a sixth consecutive month, although it is too early to tell how the recent hurricane could affect the state's jobless figures. The state Department of Commerce estimates that 368,000 Floridians were qualified as out-of-work in September,

a figure unchanged from August. The state's work force of 11.04 million shrank by 6,000 workers in the same period as retirements continue to outpace efforts to grow the labor force. The latest figures keep Florida's unemployment rate at 3.3 percent, while the national mark in September was 4.1 percent.

Milton Insurance Claims Rising - The number of insurance claims from Hurricane Milton will reach 200,000 as Floridians continued sorting out damage from the storm. Estimated insured losses Thursday reached \$2,341,971,571, up from \$2,126,286,361 on Wednesday.

Governors' Executive Order Provide Help to Election Supervisors - ,". [Link to Executive Order Impacting Upcoming Elections](#) - Governor DeSantis issued an executive order allowing supervisors of elections in Milton-affected counties to make changes such as consolidating polling sites and making it easier for displaced voters to obtain mail-in ballots. The order allows supervisors "to make, you know, reasonable, modest but reasonable, accommodations if they have had damage to any of their voting sites because of the storm, and to be able to ensure that folks have an ability and a place to be able to cast their ballot



Headlines Around the State

[AP: DeSantis approves changes to election procedures for hurricane affected counties](#)

[FlaPol: New migration to Florida drops by half in 2023, AARP urges state leaders to address cost of living](#)

[FlaPol: Not fueling around: Rick Scott rips Florida's 'ridiculous' gas shortages during and after Milton](#)

[WUSF: Tampa wants to look at what went wrong with the stormwater system during the hurricanes](#)

[Times: After Hurricane Milton, when will your packages arrive again?](#)

[Times: County tourism officials to snowbirds: Pinellas sun is 'still shining'](#)

[Sun-Sentinel: A new lookout tower to offer sweeping views of the Everglades and the best sunsets. Here's the plan.](#)

[FlaPol: 'Incredible commitment to Everglades restoration': SFWMD touts update on EAA Reservoir construction](#)

[FlaPol: Epic Universe opens May 22, Universal Orlando reveals](#)

[WUSF: Despite massive hurricane damage, Florida's insurer of last resort says it's solid](#)

[Florida Phoenix: Wilton Simpson says Milton delivered a \\$2 billion hit to Florida agriculture](#)

[My News 13: Florida Sens. Scott, Rubio propose bill to replenish FEMA disaster relief fund after hurricanes](#)

[Herald: Hurricane Milton flooded areas miles from Gulf Coast. Warming world made rain worse](#)

[AP: Florida digs out of mountains of sand swept in by back-to-back hurricanes](#)

[Times: What to know about FEMA checks, other federal Florida aid after Milton](#)

[Times: Tampa Bay area schools rushed to reopen after Milton. Was it too soon?](#)

[Times: USF St. Petersburg offers housing credit to students displaced by Milton](#)

[FlaPol: Milton lineworkers and first responders can get free theme park tickets](#)

[FlaPol: How Disney World is helping Milton relief efforts](#)

[FlaPol: Florida's new unemployment claims plunge following huge spike to start the month](#)

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES PROJECTED FOR FY 24-25

Activities listed involve local elected county commissioners, school board members and school superintendents.

2024

November 5 -	General Election Day
November 19 -	Newly Elected local officials take office
November 20-22	Rural Economic Development Summit
December 3-6 -	FSBA/FADSS - Winter Meeting – Tampa
December 4 -	Small County Coalition Legislative Meeting - Tampa
December 5 -	Small District Meeting – Tampa
December 2-6-	Interim Committee Meeting - House of Representatives Only
December 4-6	FAC Legislative Conference – Tampa
December 9-13	Interim Committee Meeting - Senate only

2025

January 13-17-	Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
January 21-24	Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
February 2 -	Deadline for release of Governors recommended budget
February 3 – 7	Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
February 10 – 14	Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate

February 17 – 21	Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
March 4	Regular Session Begins
March 18 -	Small County Coalition Legislative Briefing/Reception
March 19-	FAC Day in the Legislature
March 19 – 20	FSBA 38th Annual Day in the Legislature, Tallahassee, FL
March 19	Small School District Legislative Briefing
March 19 -20	Rural Counties Day in the Legislature
May 2 -	Regular Session Ends
June 11 – 13	FSBA/FADSS Annual Summer Conference, Tampa, FL
June 12 -	Small School District Breakfast Meeting
June 24-27	FAC Annual Summer Meeting - Orlando
June 25	Small County Coalition Annual Business Meeting - Orlando

About the Briefing!

The Briefing is prepared by Chris Doolin

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The Briefing is compiled to provide information to elected officials and staff in counties that are members of the Small County Coalition and the Small School District Council Consortium. It is also sent to Professional Colleagues and Associates. For Questions Email cdoolin@DoolinandAssoc.com

If you want to see all of the latest briefings – you can go www.smallcountycoalition.org or www.ssdec.org and click on the red **Briefing** button

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