

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-8
February 24, 2026
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant Director for Mobility and Sustainability, Matt Anderson
Governmental Affairs Director, Chelsea Granell

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Items F-8 [Start: 2:54 p.m.]
Discussion regarding Senate Bill 1422: Coral Reefs. (Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: All right, moving on to item F-8.

Assistant Director for Mobility and Sustainability: You'll get me again. So, we have here F-8 are two Bills that were introduced that the Mayor's office asked me to cover. SB 1422, which was brought to by Senator Ilana Garcia, I believe at the Biscayne Bay Commission was discussed and was looking for support. This Bill really covers and really looks into looking at the benefits of coral reefs in our region and making sure that we're healthy. Healthy and effectively managed coral reefs can help mitigate risk from floods, climate change, natural disasters, and protecting coastal properties. They also provide for risk reduction and having a restoration strategy. It talks about FEMA, how they're responsible for responding to natural disasters and providing technical and financial hazard mitigation support and really looking at nature-based solutions and coral reefs as a nature-based solution. And it really designates the protection of the coral reefs within the four-

City Commission Meeting
February 24, 2026

county area, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties, and also goes into detail of the economic benefits of what the coral reefs provide to our region, over \$6 Billion annually along the Florida coral reef region and also mentions that 98 percent of our coral reefs have been lost due to the various shocks and stretches within the Bill. It also has fines for those that cause damage to coral reefs, and it does it per square meter and fines could be up to \$375,000. So, there's a metric on each one. So, we're really looking at protecting and preserving the coral reef system within Florida. So, and it does align with a lot of the other policies that you all as the Commission has taken leadership on when it comes to the protection of Biscayne Bay and how vital that is to our city and really to our environment and to our economy. I don't know if Chelsea wanted to add.

Government Affairs Director: So, we really want to, Chelsea Granell, Government Affairs Director. We really want to thank Senator Garcia for bringing this kind of Bill forward that falls in line with all the things that we've historically done in the City of Coral Gables. Specifically in 2026, as you all recall, our legislative priorities, our policy priorities include a section that talks about protection of the environment, which includes Biscayne Bay. If you all like, I can refine that to also include Biscayne Bay and our coral reef slash marine life, which has also been a conversation that you guys have brought to the table several times. Furthermore, the Commission can direct us to work on a resolution in support of that Senate Bill. So, it's up to you all. And we're here to help you with that.

Mayor Lago: So that's why I put the item on the agenda. Thank you to staff. Thank you, both of you. I wanted to get, again, buy-in from my colleagues before I put it on the next agenda and make sure it was something that you guys were fine with. Again, benign issue, something simple. Like I mentioned before, we were having a conversation. Let's build dialogue, let's build robust legislation, let's do things the right way, have conversations. And I think this is an opportunity in the next Commission meeting to bring this forward if everybody's in favor of it. I also agree with you, Chelsea, we should revamp our legislative priorities to include this.

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I would agree. I fully support that.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: All right. Good.

Commissioner Fernandez: Can we take a vote on adding it to the legislative priorities since we're already on the sessions already moving through quickly, so.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

*City Commission Meeting
February 24, 2026*

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll second.

City Clerk Urquia: All in favor.

All: Aye.

Mayor Lago: All right, so we'll have the team draft legislation for our next Commission meeting to put this on the agenda. Thank you to both of you, good work.

Commissioner Fernandez: Thanks.