



City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, FL 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

OFFICE OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS, Tel: 305.673.7575

Melissa Berthier, Email: melissaberthier@miamibeachfl.gov

Linda-Lee Stevens, Email: lindastevens@miamibeachfl.gov

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 31, 2024

Miami Beach Strengthens Sea Turtle-Friendly Lighting Ordinance

— *The City Commission recently updated protections for endangered sea turtles* —

Miami Beach, FL – The Miami Beach City Commission has updated the city’s 18-year-old protections habitat for endangered sea turtles to include lights visible from the beach, integrating interior lighting standards for hotels and commercial properties as well as limiting fireworks to barges that affect the more than 7 miles of beachfront.

“We are encouraging everyone to do their part to help preserve this endangered species and comply with the ordinance by minimizing unnecessary artificial light sources visible from our beaches,” explained Miami Beach City Commissioner David Suarez, who sponsored the amendment to the city’s Turtle Nesting Protection ordinance that was approved on second reading during yesterday’s Oct. 30 meeting. The original ordinance was adopted in 2006.

Protected by the US Endangered Species Act of 1973 and Florida Statute Chapter 370, sea turtles, their nests or hatchlings may not be harmed or harassed under penalty of law. The City of Miami Beach is a nesting ground for three species of protected sea turtles: Loggerhead, Green and Leatherback. Handling of turtles and nests is regulated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Sea turtle nesting in Miami Beach is from April 1 to October 31st.

The ordinance also expands the applicability to include properties west of the Coastal Construction Control Line, codifies special event requirements to protect sea turtles and encourages red and amber filters for authorized vehicles that may need to access the beach at night. The Miami Beach Police Department has been piloting these light filters during the 2024 season.

In urban coastal cities like Miami Beach, sea turtle hatchlings become disoriented by artificial lighting and never find their way to the ocean. The city has a “Flip the Switch” campaign and hosts an annual family-friendly Turtle Fest event to provide education. The city asks the community to keep lights low, long and shielded to minimize the impact of artificial lighting on the beachfront and educate residents and businesses about precautions they can take to avoid disturbing sea turtles during nesting season. Visit www.mbrisingabove.com/seaturtles for additional information.

###

To request this material in alternate format, sign language interpreter (five-day notice required), information on access for persons with disabilities, and/or any accommodation to review any document or participate in any city-sponsored proceedings, call 305.604.2.ADA (2232) and select 1 for English or 2 for Spanish, then option 6; TTY users may call via 711 (Florida Relay Service).