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**The Miami Foundation Launches "Protect Biscayne Bay"
Specialty License Plate**

*Proceeds will Fund Efforts to Protect and Preserve Biscayne Bay
Florida Residents to Vote on Final Design of the Specialty Tag*

Miami, FL – The Miami Foundation, the leading philanthropic institution in Greater Miami, today unveiled three vibrant specialty license plate designs via the Florida Arts License Plate Program. Proceeds from the sale of these plates will generate revenue for critical efforts to protect Biscayne Bay and educate the community about Bay conservation.

State Senator Ileana Garcia (R- Miami) and **State Representative Nicholas X. Duran (D- Miami)** drafted the implementing legislation earlier this year to create the Protect Biscayne Bay specialty tag. Funds from the sale of the license plate will be directed to The Miami Foundation to administer toward initiatives supporting habitat restoration, pollution prevention, and environmental education and awareness. The Biscayne Bay license plate was signed into law this summer.

Residents across the State of Florida are invited to vote on their preferred design of the three plate options unveiled today at www.miamifoundation.org/biscaynebay. The winning license plate will enter circulation across the State of Florida and be available for presale vouchers.

"The Miami Foundation is thrilled to house the Biscayne Bay Recovery Fund," said **The Miami Foundation President and CEO Rebecca Fishman Lipsey**. "We are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with community partners and government leaders to prioritize the resilience of our community, not only for today, but for decades to come."

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava appointed the County's first-ever Chief Bay Officer, Irela Bagué, to serve as an advisor to the Mayor and Board of County

Commissioners and to advocate on matters related to the health and recovery of Biscayne Bay. The Chief Bay Officer will work in partnership with The Miami Foundation to implement the initiatives and programs funded by the license plate proceeds.

“We are very proud to partner with The Miami Foundation on this important initiative and thankful for the bipartisan leadership of Senator Garcia and Representative Duran in making this a reality,” said **Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava**. “The specialty license plate will generate critical funding to protect Biscayne Bay, the cornerstone of our economy, environment, and public health – while at the same time raising awareness and helping educate people across the state of Florida about the role we can all play in saving our precious Bay.”

Over the past several years, the Biscayne Bay estuary has been plagued by pollution and overuse that has resulted in fish kills and a general ecosystem degradation and led to this bi- partisan, state led effort.

“Our economy and sustainability are directly linked to the health of our waterways and environment. Miami is driven by tourism and water activities that require clean water to exist. As one of our most prized natural resources and key economic engines, there is no doubt that a healthy Biscayne Bay is crucial to ensure a resilient Miami-Dade County,” said **Senator Ileana Garcia**. “I am proud to partner with Representative Duran and The Miami Foundation to secure additional funding for the protection of Biscayne Bay and continue investing in our state’s economy and environment for generations to come.”

A regional treasure, Biscayne Bay hosts tourists and residents alike through a range of water- based recreational activities, but also supports the region's clean drinking water through its connection to the Biscayne Aquifer. Leading research suggests that Biscayne Bay related activities generated \$12.7 billion in economic output, \$6.3 billion in incomes (10.2% of the County total), 138,000 jobs, and \$627 million in tax revenue within the local economy.

“Clean water is our most prized natural resource and at the center of our prosperity and sustainability as a state. The Protect Biscayne Bay specialty license plate will allow us to generate additional funding to protect, preserve, and revitalize the bay area,” said **Representative Nick Duran**. “In the past, specialty license plates have been used to raise funds for other bodies of water and environmental causes and I am confident our fellow Miamians, and Floridians across the state, will rise to the occasion and support any and all efforts aimed at protecting Biscayne Bay.”

Florida residents are invited to visit www.miamifoundation.org/biscaynebay to vote on their favorite specialty license plate design. Voting will remain open from: Friday, October 15th through Friday, November 5th, and the winning design is expected to be announced on November 10th, 2021. Once the final design has been announced, pre-sale vouchers will be available to the public for purchase. More information on the voucher sale will be made available after the final design has been announced.

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