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**Senator Janet Cruz and Representative Joy Goff-Marcil  
Propose Legislation to Create Energy Security for Florida's  
Environment and Residents**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Yesterday, **Senator Janet Cruz (D-Tampa)**, along with **Representative Joy Goff-Marcil (D-Maitland)**, filed [SB 1360](#) and [HB 1105](#) respectively to create a pilot program for solar energy storage and use in emergency facilities. This bill creates a first of its kind energy security and disaster resilience pilot program within the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to demonstrate the ability of rooftop solar power and energy storage technologies to meet the energy needs of critical disaster resilience facilities during natural disasters and emergencies.

Eligible facilities include emergency operation centers, public emergency shelters, hospitals, assisted living facilities, airports, and wastewater facilities. The pilot consists of a \$10 million appropriation. Critical disaster facilities can apply for grants to cover up to 30 percent of the cost of clean energy backup power systems. At the conclusion of the pilot, FDACS will conduct a study on the effectiveness of using solar energy storage technologies and provide recommendations for expanding the pilot into a statewide resilience policy. "While we should be focusing much of our attention on the future energy needs of our state, it is the current predicament of our resource facilities going without electrical power during emergencies that created the need for this bill and eventual pilot program," said **Representative Goff-Marcil**.

Notable weather events, such as Hurricane Irma in 2017, contributed to more than 500 overflows across the state, dumping at least 84 million gallons of wastewater into roads, homes, parks, and waterways across Florida. **Senator Cruz** notes, "In a strong partnership with energy and environmental groups across the state, this legislation aims to prove the effectiveness of solar energy storage and distribution, all while simultaneously fixing the persistent issue of wastewater flooding that backflows into Tampa Bay whenever there is a power outage."

"Florida's emergency facilities provide essential, life-saving services in our times of greatest need. Given Florida's predisposition to natural disasters, tapping into alternative forms of energy will equip our communities with more tools to stay ready and resilient," said **Commissioner Fried**. "I applaud **Senator Cruz** and **Representative Goff-Marcil** for examining creative new ways to increase solar energy utilization in partnership with our Office of Energy. I look forward to seeing Florida reach our Sunshine State potential through innovative energy solutions."

"Solar and storage technologies hold the promise of real energy security - fuel free, locally generated, and independent of the grid," said **Katie Chiles Ottenweller, Southeast**

**Director for Vote Solar.** "The cherry on top is that they will also produce savings every day for government buildings, something diesel generators can't do."

"Adding solar and storage to critical infrastructure, such as hospitals and severe weather shelters, is the perfect way to save our communities money while enhancing our resilience," said **Heaven Campbell, Florida Program Director of Solar United Neighbors.** "A pilot program like this can serve as a seed to spread this proven technology—and its benefits—throughout the state."

"The dangerous combination of our storm-prone state and our outdated infrastructure is a problem that requires innovation and leadership," said **Jonathan Webber, Deputy Director, Florida Conservation Voters.** "With our high electric bills, frequent hurricanes, and high population of elderly residents for whom electricity is a matter of life or death, this legislation is a no-brainer. Thanks to **Senator Cruz's** and **Representative Goff-Marcil's** leadership, this pilot program will put Florida on a path towards stronger disaster resiliency and a better future for all Floridians."

"Floridians are absolutely tired of hearing the horror stories after a big storm about nursing homes running out of fossil fuel or a school gymnasium being evacuated because the generator failed to start," said **Justin Hoysratt, President of Florida's Solar Energy Industries Association (FlaSEIA).** "Solar plus added battery storage projects provide a local economic stimulus and only needs to demonstrate it can save one life for this pilot to be successful."

"When the next big storm hits, a pilot program like this could help us keep the lights on for Florida's nurses, firefighters, and emergency workers," said **Will Giese, Southeast regional director for the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).** "Solar plus storage projects are already helping us build a clean energy economy here in the Sunshine State, but a new program could expand solar use for state and local governments and make our communities more resilient, a win-win for the people of Florida. As extreme weather events continue to pick up, a successful demonstration would show others in the Southeast that it is possible to both prioritize community resilience and the local economy."

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