

July 7, 2019

Irela Bagué, *president*, Bagué Group



Last week: Americans proudly commemorated our patriotism and freedom this Independence Day. Parades, celebrations, and fireworks have been our traditions, and our Nation's Capital has always been a great place to celebrate but to raid our National Park funds to put on an elaborate show of self-importance should not be condoned. American families will visit many of our national parks this summer and will be visibly reminded that the park fees they pay will not go to enhance their park experience instead will likely be used for another "Make America Great" event.

Looking ahead: Another big idea to alleviate traffic in Miami was presented to Miami-Dade County by casino giant Genting Group. The solution, a monorail from the mainland to Miami Beach. It seems like another attempt to bring gambling to downtown Miami and expand it to the beach. Voters have already opposed the expansion of casino gambling, but it looks like those special interests are trying again, and this time they're using our traffic woes as a ruse. Let's hope the County Commission does not fall for it.

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April 7, 2019

Irela Bagué, *president*, Bagué Group

Last week: The State of Florida has a Chief Science Officer. This is another bold and unprecedented move by Governor Ron DeSantis who appointed Dr. Thomas F. Frazer a well-respected professor at the University of Florida and an expert on water quality. It is encouraging that this administration continues to fulfill its promise and recognizes that using sound science to pursue solutions will ultimately help Florida's environment and our economy.

Looking ahead: The National Parks Conservation Association celebrated 100 years of advocacy for the protection and conservation of America's National Parks. As these advocates move into a second century of conservation, we hope that our federal government will recognize that these lands are our lands and they are worth maintaining and protecting them from special interests. We owe it to our future generations.

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Feb. 10, 2019

Irela Bagué, *president*, Bagué Group

Last week: The people of Venezuela have fought courageously to regain their independence from tyranny. The desecration of a country's constitution and depriving people of fundamental human rights are issues all too familiar to my family who fled Cuba over 60 years ago and me. Venezuelans have earned the right to have the leadership they want and deserve, and we hope they soon get it.

Looking ahead: Biscayne Bay is in serious ecological decline, in recent years, the bay has suffered a seagrass die-off, coral reef disease, algal blooms, red tide and recurring sewage spills from Miami-Dade's aging water infrastructure. The county commission led by Commissioner Rebeca Sosa passed a resolution creating a Biscayne Bay Task Force to prioritize actions and create a long-term path for our Bay's recovery. The time has come to truly focus on the health of Biscayne Bay and its importance to Miami-Dade's and Florida's economy.

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Feb. 3, 2019

Irela Bagué, *president*, Bagué Group

Last week: The governor's recent appointments to the South Florida Water Management District are promising as the two individuals are longtime advocates of the environment and experienced enough to hit the ground running. However, there will be more openings on the board soon, and we hope that the individuals selected will be experienced professionals' representative of all stakeholder groups including women and minorities.

Looking ahead: The City of Miami is dealing with income inequality, affordable housing, and sea level rise challenges. It was encouraging to hear Miami Mayor Francis Suarez make quality of life, prosperity and resilience his three areas of focus during the state of the city address this week. Miami is in an excellent position to move these issues forward by maximizing investments through the Miami Forever Bond and attracting matching investments to genuinely make transformative changes in all these areas.

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