



106 N. Bronough Street (32301-7723) • P.O. Box 10209 (32302-2209) • Tallahassee, FL • Phone: (850) 222-5052 • Fax: (850) 222-7476

---

Dominic M. Calabro  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
dcalabro@floridatxwatch.org

May 19, 2009

The Honorable Charlie Crist  
Governor, State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

*Charlie*  
Dear Governor Crist:

Florida faces many challenges this year, but none more significant than the ongoing need to strengthen and stabilize our property insurance market. Both you and the Florida Legislature deserve credit for the steps that you have taken in recent years to protect homeowners.

But there is more work to do.

You now have before you an opportunity to empower consumers to decide what property insurance to buy and at what price. House Bill 1171 – which passed by overwhelming margins in both the Florida House and Senate – allows consumers to decide for themselves whether they prefer to pay a market-based premium to insure their homes with a large, well-known, and financially-strong private insurer who they know and they trust will be able to pay their claims if they need help.

The insurers subject to this legislation have a proven track record of paying claims and providing exceptional customer service when disaster strikes. Florida consumers should have the right to make this choice. Moreover, Florida needs to increase competition in its property insurance market by encouraging major brand name private insurers to write more policies in our state.

Additionally, the legislation contains strong consumer disclosure and consumer protection provisions. There are no loopholes or hidden risks in these policies.

Consumers must be provided with a notice clearly stating that the rate for the consumer choice policy is not regulated by the state Office of Insurance Regulation, but that a policy with a fully-regulated rate may be available from another private insurer or from Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. The consumer also will be encouraged to discuss all their purchase options with their agent, and will be directed to the OIR's own "shop and compare rates" website to comparison shop for lower-priced coverage. The consumer also must be provided with a rate comparison showing what they would pay for a consumer choice policy, versus what they would pay for a policy with Citizens or a private insurer offering a fully rate-regulated policy.

Based on our independent economic and fiscal research and public testimony, Florida TaxWatch recommend that you allow the "consumer choice" insurance bill, House Bill 1171, to become law once it reaches your desk. In so doing, you will take yet another strong step forward toward solving the complex challenges of our state's homeowners' market.

Sincerely,

*Dominic*  
Dominic M. Calabro  
President & Chief Executive Officer

*Thank you for your  
service to the hard working  
taxpayers of Florida!  
Dominic*

*"Celebrating 25 years of improving taxpayer value, citizen understanding and government accountability"*

---