

**For Immediate Release:**

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**CFO ATWATER: INSURANCE EXPERTS ONLY ONE CALL AWAY**

*~For free insurance assistance, Floridians can call 1-877-693-5236~*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Ahead of the June 1 start to the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater reminds Floridians to write down the State of Florida’s toll-free insurance helpline number (1-877-693-5236). Operated by the Department of Financial Services, the helpline connects Floridians directly to insurance experts who can help them file an insurance claim, better understand their policy, and settle setbacks that can arise during the claims-filing process.

“Getting back on your feet following a storm can be a stressful state of affairs, but I hope that having free and ready access to insurance expertise can help the recovery process run more efficiently for Florida families,” said CFO Atwater. “All Floridians should keep the helpline phone number on their emergency contact list and inside their family’s hurricane kit.”

Assistance provided by insurance experts working the helpline led to the recovery of \$8 million during the first quarter of 2017. These recoveries included insurance claim payments that were previously denied or underpaid by a consumer’s insurance company and premium refunds that consumers sought the Department’s help collecting. Between January 1, 2017 and March 31, 2017, helpline experts answered 70,634 calls and opened nearly 5,000 assistance requests.

For a better chance of a complication-free claims process, Floridians should carefully review all insurance policies to ensure that proper coverage is in place for their home, car, and belongings. Common reasons for complications include a lack of adequate insurance coverage and insufficient documentation or proof of damage.

For added help preparing for the 2017 hurricane season, the Department’s Division of Consumer Services offers online disaster guides and emergency preparedness toolkits. Floridians can download and print free copies at <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/Division/Consumers/Storm/>.