

For Immediate Release:

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Insurance Consumer Advocate's Homeowners' Policy & Claims Bill of Rights Working Group Meeting in Clearwater

Tallahassee - Florida Insurance Consumer Advocate Robin Smith Westcott, appointed by Florida Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, will hold a meeting of the Homeowners' Policy & Claims Bill of Rights Working Group on Monday, August 19, 2013. The meeting will be held at the Pinellas Realtors Organization located at 4590 Ulmerton Road, Clearwater, Florida from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and receive public testimony from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Westcott brought together representatives from all aspects of the insurance claims handling process to launch the Homeowners' Policy & Claims Bill of Rights Working Group, based on the challenges Florida's policyholders shared with her and Tasha Carter, Division Director of the Department of Financial Services' Division of Consumer Services at the many Insurance Consumer Forums that were held throughout Florida from March through May.

Westcott stated, "This meeting is an opportunity for homeowners who have suffered an insurance claim to allow their voices to be heard by the working group and to help others who may experience future damage to their homes from a falling tree, fire, broken pipe, hurricane or another insurable loss."

"After suffering a loss, homeowners find the claims handling process confusing and very stressful as they try to maintain a normal life style for their families. If the working group can find ways to improve the claims handling process and make it more "consumer friendly" it will be a big step in helping Floridians when they are the most vulnerable."

"Florida's policyholders need to know that the claims handling process is working for them – not against them."

The working group will prepare a comprehensive report that provides recommendations for addressing each identified aspect of the claims handling process either administratively or through proposed legislation. For more information, please see the Advocate's website at:
<http://www.myfloridacfo.com/ICA/ica>

Policyholders who need immediate assistance with an insurance-related issue should call the toll-free Insurance Helpline at 1-877-My-FL-CFO (693-5236) or seek assistance [online](http://www.myfloridacfo.com/Division/Consumers/) at <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/Division/Consumers/>.

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The Insurance Consumer Advocate is appointed by Florida Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater and is committed to finding solutions to insurance issues facing Floridians, calling attention to questionable insurance practices, promoting a viable insurance market responsive to the needs of Florida's diverse population and assuring that rates are fair and justified.