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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2017

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Citizens' Board Approves Emergency Measures

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Citizens' Board of Governors on Wednesday approved an emergency authorization that will allow the state's insurer of last resort to respond more quickly as it prepares for potential landfall and impacts of [Hurricane Irma](#) later this week.

Meeting via [conference call](#), board members unanimously approved an emergency authorization giving Citizens staff more authority to enter contracts and make purchases of goods and services to prepare for and respond to [Irma](#), a Category 5 hurricane that under current models threatens the entire state.

The Board also approved a series of pending competitively bid contracts for independent adjusting services to augment already existing agreements with several firms to provide services following a hurricane or other catastrophic event. Combined, the contracts secure more than 800 independent adjusters, in addition to Citizens employees, to begin servicing catastrophe claims.

Citizens has already ramped up preparations to respond to claims that according to preliminary projections could exceed 100,000. With more than 250,000 policies potentially in Irma's current path, Citizens is increasing its call center capabilities to handle 50,000 calls a day and has three emergency operation centers ready to deploy.

The emergency authorization will make it easier for Citizens to secure additional assistance to respond to Irma, including more flexibility to adjust vendor reimbursement levels to more closely match those of private companies and residual insurers in other states.

The emergency action mirrors an [executive order](#) signed Monday by Florida Governor Rick Scott that gives state agencies broad discretion and flexibility in responding to Irma.

"We are looking at all alternatives that are available to us to be as responsive as possible when this event occurs," Gilway told members of the board.

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In 2002, the Florida Legislature created Citizens Property Insurance Corporation (Citizens), a not-for-profit alternative insurer, whose public purpose is to provide insurance to, and serve the needs of, property owners who cannot find coverage in the private insurance market.

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