WHEREAS, managing growth is important to Florida’s economy, environment and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, local governments should work together to adopt a regional approach to planning to meet future growth; and

WHEREAS, the counties of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton are located in Northwest Florida within the jurisdiction of the West Florida Regional Planning Council and form a contiguous planning area that will benefit from joint long-range planning for a sustainable future; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant military presence in the four-county region, including the United States Air Force at Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, and Duke Field Air Force Reserve; the United States Navy at Pensacola Naval Air Station, Naval Hospital Pensacola, Corry Station at Pensacola, Whiting Field Naval Air Station at Milton, and The Navy School Explosive Ordnance Disposal at Eglin Air Force Base; the United States Army’s Sixth Ranger Training Battalion at Camp J.E. Rudder on Eglin Air Force Base; and the United States Coast Guard at the Coast Guard Station in Destin; and

WHEREAS, Eglin Air Force Base will be adding the Joint Strike Fighter Integrated Training Center, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Conventional Armament Research Organization, and the AETC Altitude Chamber with the increase of 12,000 military and civilian personnel and their families by October 2009; and

WHEREAS, due to the latest base realignment and closures, Okaloosa County will gain by October 2009, the Army’s Seventh Special Forces Group, including over 1,350 personnel whose mission is unconventional warfare and counter-insurgency; and

WHEREAS, the four-county area is the location for eight military installations, and is the home of the largest Air Force Base in the United States Department of Defense, Eglin Air Force Base, covering 724 square miles of reservation and 123,000 square miles of water ranges in the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, according to the University of Florida’s Bureau of Economic and Business Research, approximately 100,000 residents moved to the region between 1990 and 2000, and an additional 293,000 residents are expected to move to the area between
2000 and 2030, causing growing demands on economic, social, educational, health care and environmental resources; and

WHEREAS, according to the University of Florida’s Bureau of Economic and Business Research, the demand for housing in the four-county area is expected to increase approximately 40 percent by 2030, and access to affordable workforce housing will become increasingly more difficult; and

WHEREAS, Florida’s economy and quality of life depends on a clean and healthy environment; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida has spent nearly $287 million to preserve 61,655 acres of environmentally-sensitive land in the region and local governments have dedicated revenue to fund land preservation; and

WHEREAS, the four-county area, which is in the Northwest Florida Water Management District, needs to coordinate their local water supply plans to ensure continued capacity to serve existing and future populations and industries; and

WHEREAS, in the 2006 Session, the Legislature approved the implementation of Environmental Resource Permitting in Northwest Florida to ensure the preservation of the precious environmental resources in the four-county area, and

WHEREAS, the four-county area will have to provide the infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing population; and

WHEREAS, a growing population requires continuing improvements in public safety; and

WHEREAS, broadening the industry base will attract new workers from outside the area and increase job opportunities and career mobility; and

WHEREAS, demand for access to higher education at the community college and university levels is rapidly increasing within the four-county area; and

WHEREAS, existing transportation infrastructure is suffering increasing congestion due to local traffic and inter-county commuting, causing significant impacts to the State’s Intrastate Highway System and other regionally significant roadways in the four-county area; and

WHEREAS, according to the national weather service, hurricane seasons over the upcoming decade are predicted to strengthen and intensify and the need for developing north and south evacuation routes is critical, as is the need for updating emergency preparedness and response plans;
NOW, THEREFORE, I, JEB BUSH, Governor of the State of Florida, by the powers vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Florida do hereby promulgate the following Executive Order, effective immediately:

1. There is hereby created the “Committee for a Sustainable Emerald-Coast,” hereinafter referred to as the “Committee.”

2. Committee members shall be appointed by the Governor, including the Chair of the Committee, and shall be representative of the local government officials, the business community, school board officials, environmental groups, military base officials, and property owners.

3. The Committee shall consider, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning issues of regional importance related to long-range planning to assure sustainable growth and development in the four-county area (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton County), including, but not limited to, the following:

   a. Intergovernmental cooperation and conflict resolution among local governments in the four-county area;

   b. Procedures and protocols that can be used to determine the full cost accounting of development in the four-county area;

   c. Opportunities to work together to grow and diversify the economy;

   d. Opportunities to work together to meet growing infrastructure needs for roads, schools and water supply;

   e. Opportunities to work together to improve availability and access to affordable workforce housing, educational and health care facilities; and

   f. Opportunities to work together to protect our environment.

4. All agencies under the control of the Governor are directed, and all other agencies are requested, to render assistance to, and cooperate with, the Committee.
5. Members of the Committee shall not receive compensation or reimbursement for travel expenses or other expenses incurred while fulfilling their duties as Committee members; provided, however, that those members of the Committee who are employees of the State may receive reimbursement from their respective agencies to the extent allowed by Section 112.061, Florida Statutes.

6. The Committee shall meet at times and places designated by the Chairperson. Any vacancy occurring in the Committee shall be filled by appointment from the Governor.

7. The Committee shall present a Final Report no later than January 1, 2008, to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate.

8. The Committee shall cease to exist on January 1, 2008, unless extended by amendment to this Executive Order.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and have caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, The Capitol, this 28th day of June 2006.

________________________________
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

________________________________
SECRETARY OF STATE