

GOVERNOR RICK SCOTT'S ASSAULT ON FLORIDA'S ECONOMY, RESIDENTS' QUALITY OF LIFE

Rick Scott has been Florida's Governor for less than one year but the damage being done under his leadership will impact our state for generations to come. Scott's campaign mantra was "job creation," but in reality Governor Scott's policies are starving the state instead of investing in it. Florida's overall economic stability, public health and environmental protections are at risk.

Water Quality

Governor Scott ordered reckless budget cuts to critical state agencies like the Water Management Districts, Department of Environmental Protection, and others that protect our water quality. These cuts will result in the slow-down of much needed water quality improvement projects, or may halt these projects altogether. These agencies are responsible for supplying water, managing flood control, and issuing environmental permits that protect our natural resources. Governor Scott's cuts will undoubtedly impact the state's ability to supply residents and businesses with clean and safe water.

In June, Governor Scott signed into law a tax break for property owners touted as an economic stimulus that in the end could cost residents much more in lost services than the actual rebate. It is definitely a sweet deal for large companies like Florida Power and Light that stand to gain a staggering \$1.8 million in tax breaks, whereas the average Florida household will retain a paltry \$25 this year.

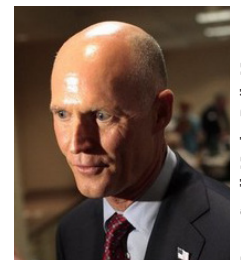
Governor Scott is sacrificing a safe and abundant water supply for residents and our tourism-rich economy by not prioritizing water quality and quantity issues. It is time for Florida to start *charging* polluters to clean up their act instead of rewarding them with tax incentives. Does

Governor Scott really believe giving tax breaks to big businesses and free permits to polluters will create more jobs, a healthier economy, and protect our water supply?

Growth Management

Governor Scott also signed into law the Community Planning Act, which will uproot longstanding growth management regulations that have guided Florida's development since 1985. The new law not only restricts the state's ability to oversee projects with regional or statewide impacts, it also significantly reduces citizens' ability to get involved in local land use planning decisions. Now, local municipalities can amend their comprehensive plans as often as they like to accommodate major development, and residents will have little or no opportunity to comment on projects that will negatively impact our water resources and facilitate sprawl development. To make matters worse, developers will no longer be responsible to pay their fair share of infrastructure costs to support new development, like roadway improvements, police or school concurrency.

Governor Scott has inflicted serious and long-term damaging changes that Florida can't afford. His job-killing budget also attacks teachers, firefighters, public employees, and health care workers.



Lexey Swall, Naples Daily News

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From the President
Robert Wendelgass

WATER IS FUNDAMENTAL

Dirty water kills. Dirty water kills fish in our rivers and streams. Dirty water can sicken people, killing the most vulnerable...the young, the old or those with other illnesses. And dirty water kills jobs in fishing, tourism and other recreational businesses...multi-billion dollar industries in the US.

It seems like some legislators have forgotten how important clean water is, and the sorry state of our nation's water resources forty years ago that led to passage of the Clean Water Act.

They've forgotten that before the Clean Water Act, rivers caught on fire, fish couldn't survive in many of our rivers and streams and even some of our Great Lakes were declared dead. And now they want to go back to the bad old days before the Clean Water Act. We can't let that happen.

Before the Clean Water Act, states set their own rules with little or no federal oversight. Some states had good rules, others had weak ones...but polluters could threaten to move their plants to another state unless states weakened their clean water rules. The bottom line: leaving water protection to the states alone doesn't work, and results in dirty rivers, dead lakes and unsafe drinking water.

But some politicians have forgotten that lesson and want to remove the federal government's responsibility to make sure that state programs are consistent with the Clean Water Act. They want to make it easier for big polluters to dump in our rivers and streams, endangering special places like Chesapeake Bay, the Everglades, the Great Lakes and San Francisco Bay. They want to make it easier for mining companies to destroy rivers and streams, literally burying them under tons of waste from mountaintop mining.

Bills like HR 2018 would save some big companies money by allowing them to pollute our rivers and streams. **But the rest of us would pay the price.** It would hurt the multi-billion dollar fishing and tourism industries that depend on clean water, costing jobs. It would increase costs for drinking water systems that would have to work harder to make our tap water safe — raising the bills for consumers. And more of us would pay the price with our health as our wells and drinking water supplies get polluted.

We can't let polluters and their allies in Congress turn back the clock. Contact your representatives in Congress and tell them to keep their hands off the Clean Water Act. Let them know that you don't want to return to the days before the Clean Water Act when our waterways caught on fire or were dead. Tell them to oppose bills like HR 2018 that will protect polluters at the price of our health and our economy.

Editor's Note: To maximize the resources available for direct support of Clean Water Action's national campaigns and community-based programs around the country, the organization has suspended printing and mailing of all Clean Water Action Currents publications. The suspension affects both the state/regional editions and the national publication. While printing is on hold, copies of both publications will be made available to all Clean Water Action members by e-mail and on the Clean Water Action web site.



From the Florida Director
Kathy Aterno

DON'T SIT ON THE SIDELINES

We all want an efficient, streamlined government, but we also need to have balance to ensure we don't dismantle or disregard key public health and environmental protections. Florida's economy and our residents depend on having clean and safe water. Today, at all levels of government we are seeing an attack on water quality protections. At the state and federal level attempts are being made to gut fundamental water quality laws that protect our residents.

Our once pristine beaches, flowing lakes and rivers, and America's Everglades are at risk from uncontrolled pollution. Nutrient pollutants like nitrogen and phosphorus threaten the health of our waterbodies and the viability of our successful fishing economies. Rock mining operations are digging up our sustainable farmlands. Longstanding growth management laws are being overthrown in favor of lenient regulations that facilitate sprawl development. It is more important than ever for Floridians to be informed and engaged with the numerous issues going on in our state that are directly impacting you and will continue to impact future generations.

Please don't sit on the sidelines — GET INVOLVED! First, contact your elected officials, such as your Mayor, County Commissioner, State Legislator, Governor, or Congressional Representatives. Without your input, the only voices they will hear are those of high-powered, well-financed lobbyists representing polluters in Washington, Tallahassee, and your local community. We must remind decision-makers that their first and foremost priority is to protect the public health and safety of those who elected them — not special interests.

Second, please make one personal lifestyle change. Cut your household water usage or energy consumption; by shortening your shower by just two minutes you can conserve ten gallons of water, and by "dialing up" your thermostat by one degree you can save money and conserve energy.

Providing clean and abundant water for our Sunshine State is no small task. It will take a combination of commitment from local, state, and national decision-makers and of individual citizens to initiate meaningful change.

CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY FOR THE EVERGLADES?

Wind Capital Group is hoping to invest in a clean energy future for South Florida with its proposal to construct a wind farm in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) south of Lake Okeechobee. The St. Louis-based company hopes to build Florida's first wind farm, which would produce the estimated energy equivalent of more than 500,000 barrels of oil each year. The project is also estimated to bring 250-300 construction jobs to the struggling Belle Glade community.

Ongoing tests will determine the extent of impacts that the proposed turbines might have on native and migratory birds in the EAA. This project is still in its formative stage; specific requirements as to the height, lighting, and placement of the turbines are still being explored.



COMMUNITY FOCUS: Rock Mining in Palm Beach County



Photo by Cara Capp, Clean Water Action

Rock Mining

Rock mining can have devastating long-term consequences on Palm Beach County's water supply. The practice involves blasting as far as 60 feet deep into the underlying porous aquifer that provides water for the entire County. The blasting is facilitated through use of dangerous chemicals and the depth of excavation can cause detrimental impacts to the sensitive flow of ground and surface waters, contaminating our drinking water supply and causing environmental and economic regional harm.

In August 2010, Palm Beach County wisely enacted a one-year moratorium on the approval of new or expanded mining operations. That year was intended to allow active stakeholders to come up with a more appropriate regulatory framework to manage rock mining activities in the County. However, after almost a year of negotiations, the rock mining industry and associated landowners have refused to admit the dangers involved in the mining practice or to compromise on a regulatory mechanism.

The decision was brought before the Palm Beach County Commission in July 2011 and sadly a majority of Commissioners voted not to enact stronger regulations to protect the County's residents and water resources from the threat of expanded mining operations.

Clean Water Action is urging all Palm Beach County residents to contact your County Commissioners and remind them that they were elected to protect your family's health and well being, not the pocketbooks of the rock mining industry.

ECONOMY OF THE EVERGLADES

Restoring America's Everglades will do more than restore Florida's environment, it will also bolster our economy. A study commissioned by the Everglades Foundation reported that every dollar committed to Everglades restoration will yield a \$4 return on investment. In total, this could amount to up \$46.5 billion in gains to Florida's economy and the creation of more than 440,000 jobs over the next fifty years.

Did you know that one in three Floridians get their daily drinking water supply from the Everglades? Restoring America's Everglades is the only way for Florida to ensure the long-term health of its residents, ecosystems, and economy. If properly funded and implemented, the water quality improvement and water storage projects encompassed in Everglades restoration will provide a clean water supply for 6 million residents. It's more than just ecosystem health — it's public health! Without restoring the Everglades, the financial cost of supplying our residents and businesses with clean water will be astronomical burden to future generations.

Not only does the Everglades supply a large portion of our drinkable water, it also accounts for thousands of jobs annu-



Photo courtesy National Park Service

Everglades

ally in the tourism, fishing and hunting industries. It is estimated that a restored Everglades would generate over 40,000 new jobs in the commercial and recreational fish industries, and over 270,000 construction jobs.

The bottom line is as crystal clear as the iconic flowing waters of the River of Grass: restoring America's Everglades makes good economic sense for Florida.

WANTED: WATER!

Drought Still Threatens Residents, Businesses, and Ecosystems

Water conservation should always be a priority for Floridians, but especially during this year as we have experienced a drastic and extended dry season. Over the past few months, Florida has seen record rainfall deficits and extreme dry surface conditions. Scientists reported detrimental impacts to our environment and water resources, and these impacts extend to residents and businesses even into the wet season.

Communities like West Palm Beach and Tampa enacted stringent water restrictions for residential communities, but acted so late into the drought season that these measures were not nearly as meaningful as they might have been if used as preventative instead of reactive measures. Newspapers reported that Southwest Florida experienced its worst drought in 80 years. Lake Okeechobee water levels have fell below 10 feet above sea level for the first time since 2007. Extreme dry conditions like these were statewide.

Clean Water Action is urging our members to continue to exercise prudence with your water usage and conserve as much water as possible; though the wet season has officially begun, we have not yet received enough precipitation to pull us out of the drought conditions that resulted from extended months without rain. You can do this by refraining from watering your lawn, taking shorter showers, and making sure they all leaky faucets are repaired. *For more conservation ideas, check out the South Florida Water Management District's water conservation website at www.savewaterfl.com.*

FLORIDIANS' VOTING RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

Clean Water Action believes that democracy should work for all. The voting rights of Florida's citizens are again under attack. In May, Governor Scott signed HB 1355, a politically motivated bill that makes it harder for minorities, college students, and low-income Floridians to register and vote.

If approved by the Justice Department, HB 1355 would:

- Cut early voting days in half from 14 days to just 8 days.
- Remove early voting the Sunday before Election Day.
- Force voters moving to a new county to vote on a provisional ballot, which studies have shown are only counted about 50% of the time.
- Revise the existing forty-year law that allows voters to change their address at the polling station.
- Mandate onerous restrictions that will virtually eliminate third party voter registration efforts, such as those organized by the League of Women Voters and Boy Scouts of America.

HB 1355 threatens to silence the voices of minority voters who rely heavily on early voting opportunities. The bill also attacks college-age voters who move frequently and whose updated address may prevent them from voting on a standard ballot.

Clean Water Action is encouraging all members to contact Attorney General Eric Holder at AskDOJ@usdoj.gov. Ask him to protect our voting rights by rejecting this bill.



FLORIDA'S DIRTY HABIT: NUTRIENT POLLUTION

Water Quality at Risk

Blue-green algal blooms are popping up across Florida's waterways and causing a big stink for residents and tourists. Nutrient pollutants like nitrogen and phosphorous are invading Florida's waterways and causing these dangerous outbreaks. Toxic algae has a foul smell and can cause serious harm to humans and animals alike, not to mention cause devastating impacts to our state's critical fishing and tourism economies.

These pollutants come from urban and industrial sources, and heavily-used fertilizers and pesticides are the culprits. Residents, agricultural operations, large-scale industrial and municipal wastewater treatment plants all send untreated pollution into our rivers and streams.

Over the years, high nitrogen and phosphorus levels have had devastating impacts on Florida's commercial fishing economy, which is among the most profitable in the nation. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that commercial fishing alone generates \$5.6 billion in in-state sales and creates over 108,000 Florida jobs annually. However, this success depends directly on healthy fish populations. Over the past five years, dangerous algal blooms have led to inedible fish populations in the St. Johns, St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Rivers, causing fishing industries to shut down entirely for months at a time. Florida's residents cannot continue to sustain this loss of revenue and jobs due to unregulated pollution.

Though the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has explicitly told Florida to adopt long-overdue water quality standards, many polluting industries and Florida's Congressional Delegation strongly oppose such standards, claiming



Photo by Chris Williams, Clean Water Laboratories

Polluted Water

the cost of compliance will inordinately burden business and negatively impact local economies. The National Academy of Science (NAS) has been asked to conduct an investigation into the economic impacts of the EPA's proposed numeric nutrients rule and give guidance on appropriate actions to be taken. Clean Water Action and its environmental partners have urged the NAS to consider not only the cost of cleanup by polluting industries in their analysis, but also the benefits that a clean and safe water supply will have on the numerous economies that put a majority of Florida's residents to work each year, such as fishing and tourism.

Florida's heaviest polluters should also bear the heaviest burden when it comes to cleaning up our state's nitrogen and phosphorous overloads. Clean Water Action urges Florida's decision-makers to ensure that the public is not forced to shoulder the costs while private industries take all the financial gains.

Florida Currents

SUMMER UPDATE 2011

Clean Water Action is a national citizens' organization working for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health-threatening pollution, creation of environmentally-safe jobs and businesses, and empowerment of people to make democracy work.

Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups, coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life.

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