

FLORIDA CONSERVATION COALITION



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Bob Graham

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Lee Constantine

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FLORIDA WILDLIFE
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Individuals

Craig Diamond

Ryan Smart

Victoria Tschinkel

Estus Whitfield

March 2, 2020

Senator Debbie Mayfield
404 South Monroe Street
322 Senate Office Building
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Senator Mayfield,

Our water is Florida's lifblood connecting us across our state and requires strong, comprehensive protection statewide. The Florida Conservation Coalition (FCC) believes that in order to protect Florida's unique and diverse waters we must address the major pollutant sources in all regions of our state, rural and urban areas alike.

Senate Bill 712 "The Clean Waterways Act" is our last good chance for saving our beleaguered waters, but as it currently stands, cannot hope to effectively protect them.

Taken in isolation, there are several sections of Senate Bill 712 that move wastewater protections in a positive direction. The FCC's member organizations represent Floridians from all regions of the state where some elements of this bill would lead to stronger regulations for local water bodies. Yet, as a statewide coalition, it would be remiss to ignore significant flaws in the bill, including the reliance on a broken Basin Management Action Plan program and lack of provisions to protect waters impacted by agricultural pollution.

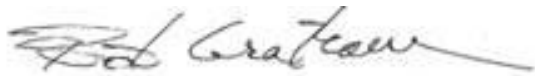
With the 2020 legislative session coming to a close, we have a narrowing window of opportunity to pass truly effective and comprehensive legislation protecting and restoring our springs, rivers, lakes, coasts, wetlands and estuaries statewide. We urge you to strengthen the bill with the following changes attached:

- Require Basin Management Action Plans to achieve water quality goals when adopted and provide an estimate of the necessary nonpoint source pollution load reductions by category.
- Require the creation of a remediation plan for agricultural pollution on par with SB 712's current required remediation plans for septic tanks and wastewater treatment facilities.
- Amend the Wastewater Grant Program to allow funding of agricultural remediation projects and remove language prioritizing projects that would incentivize unsustainable sprawling development.

- Eliminate the land application of biosolids in environmentally sensitive areas and bolster regulations statewide to ensure they do not contribute to water quality degradation.
- Remove recently added provisions preempting local Rights of Natures laws and changing the Cabinet votes necessary to appoint the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection.

On behalf of the 80 member organizations of the FCC, thank you for your hard work for Florida's waterways. Each year that we fail to pass effective comprehensive water quality legislation we face another impending year of devastating algal blooms threatening our economy, public health and fish and wildlife. We urge you to not let this be a wasted year. Make SB 712 a bill that works for all Floridians and equitably protects waters statewide.

Sincerely,



Bob Graham
Chairman
Florida Conservation Coalition



Lee Constantine
Vice Chairman
Florida Conservation Coalition

CC:

Governor Ron DeSantis

Secretary Noah Valenstein