



Everglades Coalition

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon of Florida
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Audubon of Southwest Florida
Caloosahatchee River Citizens
Association
Clean Water Action
Clean Water Network
Collier County Audubon Society
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
Ding Darling Wildlife Society
Earthjustice
Environment Florida
The Environmental Coalition
Everglades Coordinating Council
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
Florida Defenders of the Environment
Florida Keys Environmental Fund
Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Oceanographic Society
Florida Sierra Club
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of Arthur R. Marshall
Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry Glades Audubon Society
Izaak Walton League
Florida Keys Chapter
Florida Division
Mangrove Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America
Last Stand
League of Women
Voters of Florida
Loxahatchee River Coalition
Martin County
Conservation Alliance
National Audubon Society
National Parks
Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge
Association
Natural Resources
Defense Council
The Ocean Conservancy
The Pegasus Foundation
Sanibel-Captiva
Conservation Foundation
Save It Now, Glades!
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Broward Group
Sierra Club Central Florida Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
South Florida Audubon Society
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League
World Wildlife Fund

May 27, 2011

The Honorable Rick Scott
Office of the Governor
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: Veto SB 2142, HB 7207, CS/CS/HB 421, and CS/CS/CS/HB 993

Dear Governor Scott:

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 53 local, state and national conservation and environmental organizations committed to the full restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem, is seriously concerned about the possible impacts of several bills from the 2011 Regular Session on Florida's treasured environment and in particular the Everglades. The Everglades Coalition **requests that you exercise your constitutional authority to veto the following bills.**

- **SB 2142** limits ad valorem tax collections by the state's five water management districts and rolls back the districts' budgets by as much as 30%. Floridians rely on the water management districts for clean and abundant water resources. The limit on the South Florida Water Management District is likely to reduce the effort towards cleaning up polluted water in the Greater Everglades and the Lake Okeechobee watershed. It jeopardizes the long-term efforts to execute water quality, storage and restoration projects to re-establish freshwater flows through the Greater Everglades. Additionally, it undermines the role of the Governor to direct water policy.
- **HB 7207** undercuts thirty-five years of thoughtful growth management to serve the broader public interest in protecting unique resources. This bill was amended to pick up a controversial rewrite of growth management legislation. The bill makes it easier for developers to amend local land use plans, eliminates the important 9J-5 rule, diminishes need as a condition of new growth, and removes the ability of communities to hold referenda on comprehensive planning issues. It will not help communities identify locations for suitable development to best match local needs.
- **CS/CS/HB 421** retroactively allows water to be impeded or diverted for agricultural activities regardless of harm to natural resources or downstream landowners. It was introduced on behalf of two major landowners who were caught destroying wetlands and altering surface water flows. The bill also

allows developers to escape mitigation when converting agricultural land to development.

- **CS/CS/CS/HB 993** disenfranchises the public from acting to protect Florida's environment. It requires cumbersome review of state rules. Many of the rules subject to the bill are those used to protect Florida's environmental resources. Regulated interests will push hard to limit new and existing rules and the public will be largely left out of the process. Additionally, the bill reverses the process that citizens must use when they choose to challenge environmental permits making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prevail in a hearing.

In sum, the reduction of protections for Florida's precious environmental resources from these four bills places Florida's future at risk. Any possible benefit to Florida's economy is outweighed by the risk of harm. Florida's economy is intimately connected to the availability of abundant clean water and sustainable natural resources. One in three Floridians depend on the Everglades for clean drinking water. We urge you to choose to protect these valuable resources instead of compromising them. **Please veto SB 2142, HB 7207, CS/CS/CSHB 993 and CS/CS/HB 421.**

Sincerely,



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