



January 21, 2020

Senator Debbie Mayfield, Chair
Senate Agriculture, Environment and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee

Re: SB 712 Water Quality Improvements; Clean Waterways Act

Dear Senator Mayfield and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) we write to express support for the critical scope and importance of SB 712 and caution you on amendments made yesterday that seriously weaken this important water quality bill.

SB 712 is the direct result of Governor DeSantis's commitment to address the state's water quality crisis by revising failing water quality regulations, increasing monitoring and reporting and stepping up enforcement and oversight to identify and target sources of pollution to achieve measurable water quality improvements. The Blue Green Algae Task Force the Governor appointed evaluated the science and sources of pollution and recommended the targets for regulatory improvements that have been incorporated in this bill including: septic systems, wastewater infrastructure, stormwater runoff, Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP), agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) policies and agricultural use of biosolids.

Unfortunately the amendment filed yesterday makes the bill inconsistent with the Governors stated objectives and undermines recommendations of the Task Force by increasing the length of time between the collection and transmission of information from agricultural producers from an annual basis to every two years and removes provisions that would make agricultural BMPs enforceable earlier and in more impaired waterbodies. In many impaired waterbodies, including the Caloosahatchee in our region, agricultural runoff is the largest source of pollutant loading accounting for nearly 80% of the nutrient pollution entering the estuary. Reducing monitoring reporting in real time is the opposite of what the Governor and Task Force have recommended. Data is useful when it can be used in real time to fairly and efficiently identify and target sources and initiate corrective actions.

We need comprehensive, targeted regulation of pollution sources to restore and protect our states waters. We urge you to not weaken this bill with the referenced amendment language and pass the strongest bill possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rae Ann Wessel
SCCF Natural Resource Policy Director