



CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM
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March 23, 2007

The Honorable Michael Bennett
Senate Office Building, Room 216
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Re: Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act
Senate Bill 2346, House Bill 1281

Dear Senator Bennett:

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program's Management Conference has reviewed Senate Bill 2346, and its companion House Bill 1281, entitled, "Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act." The Charlotte Harbor NEP commends both you and Rep. Fitzgerald for introducing this critical amendment to the original Act passed in 1985 and supports the passage and implementation of SB 2346/HB 1281.

The Charlotte Harbor NEP is a partnership program, created by Section 320 of the Federal Clean Water Act, to protect and preserve the Charlotte Harbor estuary, recognized as an estuary of national significance and one of the most productive estuaries in Florida.

Since 1996, the Charlotte Harbor NEP has developed and adopted a *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP) for the estuary and its watershed. This plan was developed utilizing four committees of citizens, scientists, resource managers, industry representatives and policy makers. Our partnership includes, among others, Lee, Polk, Manatee, Sarasota, Hardee, DeSoto, and Charlotte Counties; several cities; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; and both the South and the Southwest Florida Water Management Districts.

The Charlotte Harbor NEP supports improving water quality and estuarine habitat within the Myakka River corridor. Senate Bill 2346 and House Bill 1281 are consistent with our CCMP:

- Quantifiable Objective HA-2: Identify, establish and maintain a more natural seasonal variation in freshwater flows by the year 2010 for the Upper Myakka River (with special attention to Flatford Swamp).
- Priority Action FW-B/P: Enhance fish and wildlife habitat along shorelines including canals, lakes, riverine systems, and artificial waterbodies.

On behalf of the Charlotte Harbor NEP, this letter of support is being sent to Senator Burt Saunders and Representative Williams, chairs of the Senate and House committees considering this bill and to the Charlotte Harbor NEP Legislative Delegation in Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Polk, Hardee and DeSoto Counties.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (239) 338-2556 or at lbeever@swfrpc.org.

Sincerely,



Lisa B. Beever, PhD, AICP
Director

cc: Representative Fitzgerald, Sponsor, HB 1281
Senator Burt Saunders, Chair, Committee on Environmental Preservation & Conservation
Representative Trudi Williams, Chair, Environment & Natural Resources Council
Charlotte Harbor NEP Legislative Delegation:
Senator Paula Dockery, District 15
Senator JD Alexander, District 17
Senator Lisa Carlton, District 23
Senator Dave Aronberg, District 27
Representative Seth McKeel, District 63
Representative Marsha Bowen, 65
Representative Baxter Troutman, 66
Representative Ron Reagan, District 67
Representative Doug Holder, 70
Representative Michael Grant, District 71
Representative Paige Kreegel, District 72
Representative Nick Thompson, District 73
Representative Gary Aubuchon, District 74