






CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

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March 24, 2006

Rodney Barreto, Chair
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Farris Bryant Building
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Re: HB 1345; SB 2490

Dear Mr. Barreto:

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (NEP) has reviewed House Bill 1345 and Senate Bill 2490 relating to saltwater fishing and supports the language in Section 4 adding blue crab traps to the trap retrieval program.

The Charlotte Harbor NEP is a partnership program, created by Section 320 of the 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 establishing a funding mechanism to support the removal of derelict blue crab traps from Florida waters. We have the following comment:

- House Bill 1345 and related bill SB 2490 are consistent with our CCMP, Priority action FW-R: Promote development and enhancement of plans and programs to improve fish and shellfish resources.

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

Sincerely,

Lisa B. Beever, Ph.D, AICP
Director