





CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

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March 24, 2006

Rep. Ralph Poppell
Florida House of Representatives
1102 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: HB 1459

Dear Representative Poppell:

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) has reviewed House Bill 1459 relating to regulation of certain reptiles and supports the proposed changes to current law.

The CHNEP 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 amending the current law to regulate reptiles that are on a list established by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. In fact, the CHNEP would like to offer its assistance to the FWC in developing the required list. We have the following comment:

- House Bill 1459 help implement the CHNEP's CCMP, Objective **FW-4**: On conservation, preservation, stewardship, and other public lands achieve controllable levels of invasive exotic plants as defined by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council and exotic nuisance animals as provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission by the year 2020. Encourage and support the removal and management of invasive exotic plants and exotic nuisance animals on private lands.

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