

**Letter to the editor: New environmental rule changes designed to benefit agriculture, business**

**November 3, 2006**

The next time you read an article or letter to the editor by some upper-management bureaucrat from the Environmental Protection Agency, the state Department of Environmental Protection or the South Florida Water Management District and how they are dedicated to protecting Florida's water, remember this little hose job.

In January 2006 the EPA changed Florida's rules (Rule 62-302.800) to allow more nutrients and bacteria and less dissolved oxygen (among other negative changes) into Florida waters than is allowed.

At first grin you're probably saying: "You're making this up, right?" Sadly, no. Once again our esteemed state organizations, sworn to help the public by keeping our environment clean and healthy, is sticking it to the people who pay their salaries. Can you guess who's behind this, and why our current governor hasn't stepped in to stop this travesty? Have you heard anything from any of our current elected officials about this and their plans to stop it? Can you guess who might benefit from our loss?

Would you believe agriculture, Florida Pulp, the Florida Engineering Society and the Florida Chamber of Commerce? What, the chamber of commerce?

The EPA actually stated that the goal of this change is to relieve business of the requirements to clean up the state's widespread nutrient pollution, which has (as we well know in Martin County) resulted in algae blooms and water you can't even wade in. Duh!

Thank God for the Clean Water Network of Florida and the St. Johns Riverkeeper, who are challenging this travesty in court. Then send a check to the Rivers Coalition when their lawsuit is announced, or don't complain the next time the St. Lucie Estuary is green.

And who are you voting for this year?

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