

Letter to the editor:

Big Sugar is as popular as tofu stand at Daytona Bike Week

TC Palm

January 22, 2007

Robert Coker, vice president of U.S. Sugar Corp., must be under a lot of pressure these days to write a letter to the editor ("Court ruling ignores main issues affecting Lake O," Jan. 16) bemoaning how sugar is so mistreated.

I love the way he uses Belle Glade, Clewiston and South Bay as the fall guys in the lawsuit, and how they'll flood "every year" now that Sugar can't backpump its phosphate-laden water back into Lake Okeechobee. God forbid it put a little extra water on the sugar crop. Remember the term "shared responsibility?"

An idea: How about creating a natural flow-way through the sugar fields with cleansing grasses that take all the extra water he mentioned? Mr. Coker's comments about all the pollution coming into Lake Okeechobee from the developments in Orlando was more smoke and mirrors. Certainly they contribute to the problem, but Mr. Coker forgot to mention his friends who own the 20-plus industrial-sized dairy and cattle farms above Lake Okeechobee and contribute 90 percent of the pollutants.

Mr. Coker should realize that Big Sugar is as popular as a tofu stand at Daytona Bike Week because of the years it has spent buying off politicians, fighting real cleanup, taking ridiculous amounts of federal aid, twisting the truth and using the South Florida Water Management District as a subsidiary. The public is fed up with having to sue agencies like the Department of Environmental Protection, SFWMD and the Army Corps of Engineers to get a federal judge to tell them to do their job and enforce laws already on the books.

Perhaps it's time to ask the players in the sugar industry what legacy they want to leave — one their grandchildren can be proud of, or one as the poster boys for greed and pollution.

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Sewall's Point