

The Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition

Caribbean Conservation Corporation & Sea Turtle Survival League •
Reef Relief • Gulf Restoration Network • Natural Resources Defense Council •
The Surfrider Foundation • The Ocean Conservancy • Environmental Defense Fund

April 30, 2008

Speaker Marco Rubio
Florida House of Representatives
402 South Monroe Street, Capitol 420
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: Commendation for Coastal Protection

House Speaker Rubio,

The Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition commends you for the landmark legislation Florida's 110th House of Representatives passed this week to protect and restore the health of our great State's coastal and ocean ecosystems upon which we depend for food, recreation, employment and our quality of life. The Coalition is a first-time effort of environmental organizations, representing millions of citizens across the country and over 100,000 activists in Florida, who have joined forces for the conservation, protection and restoration of Florida's unique coastal and marine environment.

It was a tremendous step forward for the future of our coasts when both Representative Stan Mayfield's planning initiative to phase-out the 6 ocean outfalls on Florida's southeast coast and his measure to address sand flows disrupted by Florida's inlets moved to Governor Charlie Crist's Office for consideration. We applaud the House of Representatives on passing these historic initiatives that, respectively, end the practice of wastewater being disposed of in the ocean and starts the State on a new path towards sustainability in managing sand flow along Florida's beaches.

As water flow is the cornerstone of Everglades restoration, the return of natural sand flow is critical to our beaches. Almost half of Florida's sandy shoreline is designated "critically" eroded and the Department of Environmental Protection has identified navigational inlets as a leading contributor of coastal erosion. Representative Mayfield's Inlet Management initiative will greatly assist in the "natural re-nourishment" of beaches and is truly landmark legislation for the preservation of our shores.

Similarly, Representative Mayfield's Wastewater Disposal initiative effectively phases-out the practice of dumping sewage in the ocean. (Over the past 30 years Florida discharged enough effluent into the ocean to fill Lake Okeechobee three times.) Representative Hasner was an outstanding advocate for this long needed action and contributed greatly to creating a quality measure all Floridians can be proud of. It was truly a thoughtful and inclusive stakeholder process, driven by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection that made this effort possible; it was a model of open government and one we hope your successors will embrace. A new day has dawned

for Florida's oceans and South Florida's water future. We applaud you and your colleagues for tackling this monumental problem.

There is no doubt that the House of Representatives, of the 110th Florida Legislature, has done a tremendous service to the Great State of Florida and her unique and extremely valuable coastal and ocean resources. We thank you for your visionary leadership and commend you for a job well done.

Sincerely,
Gary Appelson – Caribbean Conservation Corp.
Sarah Chasis, J.D. – Natural Resources Defense Council
Ericka D'Avanzo – Surfrider Foundation
Jerry Karnas – Environmental Defense Fund
Paul G. Johnson – Reef Relief
Joe Murphy – Gulf Restoration Network
David White, J.D. – The Ocean Conservancy

cc: Charlie Crist, Governor, State of Florida
Adam Hasner, Representative, Florida House of Representatives
Stan Mayfield, Representative, Florida House of Representatives
Ray Sansom, Representative, Florida House of Representatives
Michael Sole, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Ken Haddad, Exec. Director, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conserv. Commission