

# **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

President Ken Pruitt  
Florida Senate  
404 South Monroe Street, Capitol 409  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Commendation for Coastal Protection

Senate President Pruitt,

The Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition commends you for the landmark legislation Florida's 110<sup>th</sup> Senate 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 Senator Burt Saunders' planning initiative to phase-out the 6 ocean outfalls on Florida's southeast coast and Senator Dennis Jones' measure to address sand flows disrupted by Florida's inlets moved to Governor Charlie Crist's Office for consideration. We applaud the Senate on passing these historic initiatives that, respectively, end the practice of waste water 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. Senator Jones' 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, the Wastewater Disposal initiative championed by Senator Saunders effectively phases-out the practice of dumping sewage in the ocean. (Over the past 30 years Florida had discharged enough effluent into the ocean to fill Lake Okeechobee three times.) In developing this measure, Senator Saunders promoted a thoughtful and inclusive stakeholder process driven by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. This was a model of open government and one we hope your successors will embrace. It is the dawning of a new day not only for Florida's oceans but South Florida's water future now that the Senate has tackled this monumental problem.

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We believe the Senate of the 110<sup>th</sup> 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  
Jeff Atwater, Senator, Florida Senate  
Dennis Jones, Senator, Florida Senate  
Burt Saunders, Senator, Florida Senate  
Michael Sole, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Ken Haddad, Exec. Director, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conserv. Commission