

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 22, 2008

Representative Jimmy Patronis
Florida House of Representatives
402 South Monroe Street, Capitol 1102
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: Inlet Management (HB 1427/SB 1672)

Dear Representative Patronis,

The Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition, wishes to express concern over recent discussions regarding changes to the state's 30 year erosion setback line. The Coalition's steering committee organizations represent over 100,000 members, businesses and activists in Florida deeply concerned for Florida's unique seaside and marine resources.

Recently, we sent letters to Representative Stan Mayfield and Senator Dennis Jones commending their efforts to improve Florida's inlet management program by addressing the need to restore the natural flow of sand along Florida's coasts. As water flow is the cornerstone of Everglades restoration, so is the return of natural sand flow to our beaches.

There is widespread public support for improved inlet management. However, recent discussion of altering the inlet management concept, which we commended Representative Mayfield and Senator Jones for, by modifying the law governing the 30 year erosion projection setback is troubling. This long standing coastal setback was established to protect the beach and dune system and adjacent private upland investment. As you know beach management is very complicated and different issues arise on different beaches all over the state. A significant change in how Florida manages and protects its beaches through sweeping changes to the 30 year erosion setback line seems best served via a need-based, deliberative process relying on science and extensive stakeholder input.

We suggest that any changes to the state's coastal setbacks should await the Coastal High Hazard Study Committee's report. The Committee, appointed two years ago by then Governor Jeb Bush, tasked DEP to assess the need for changes to the state's coastal setback policies. That study has been initiated, is well underway, and was contracted to one of the state's most respected coastal engineering firms.

9 Island Avenue, Suite 501, Miami Beach, FL 33139
(305) 586-1961 • info@flcoastalandocean.org
www.flcoastalandocean.org

In an era of rising seas, increased storm activity, and heightened coastal erosion, it is imperative that Florida take carefully measured steps when implementing policies affecting beaches, one of her most valuable natural and economic resources. We hope you share this view and appreciate your consideration of our concerns.

Respectfully,

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
Ken Pruitt, President, Florida Senate
Marco Rubio, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives
Dennis Jones, Senator, Florida Senate
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