

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Gayle Harrell
Florida State Senator
404 Senate Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

The Honorable Jennifer Bradley
Florida State Senator
406 Senate Building
404 South Monroe St
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

The Honorable John Snyder
Florida State Representative
303 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Senator Harrell, Senator Bradley, and Representative Snyder,

Thank you for addressing the concerns of millions of Floridians who opposed recent proposals to develop state parks with golf courses, recreational courts and lodges by putting forth SB 80 and its companion, HB 209.

We, **the below-signed seventy (70) organizations and businesses**, applaud your effort to foster public awareness and engagement by proposing changes that would require 30-day advance notice for public hearings related to land management plans, among other provisions in Section 2 of the bills. We also agree that an inventory of deferred maintenance projects is prudent, as described in Section 6 of the bills.

However, the organizations identified below are concerned that the proposed language fails to prevent future proposals from being eligible for consideration. As such, we request the following changes:

- Within Section 1, include language that further defines the legislative intent to conserve lands within state parks and promote nature-based recreation, rather than activities that require alteration of the natural landscape. Also, include management directives to ensure implementation of the State Park Preservation Act.
- Remove references that encourage developing disturbed areas. Such areas often have the potential to provide important wildlife habitat and other ecosystem services when

appropriately restored and many land management plans include restoration of the areas in their management goals. Specifically, remove the phrase “and using disturbed upland regions to the maximum extent practicable.”

- Include language that clarifies what types of “unsolicited proposals” will be considered, or direct FDEP to create policies to address Ch. 255.065 FS.
- Remove terms such as “to the maximum extent practicable,” “significant harm,” and “avoid” which can be construed to allow the activities the legislation is intended to prevent.
- Add a section that includes explicit prohibitions, as well as definitions of specific terms in order to remove ambiguity in interpretation.
- Include state forests and state wildlife management areas to the types of public land addressed in the bills. In addition to state parks, the state’s Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) also approves the management plans for these lands.

This legislative session presents an opportunity to close the gaps in Florida’s law that allowed for development proposals that would have irreparably harmed our state parks in the first place. The massive, bipartisan outcry from Floridians to stop the plans is a clear indicator that citizens will passionately protect our public lands. Please consider our recommendations. We look forward to working with you and putting the full support of our organizations behind these good bills.

Sincerely,

1000 Friends of Florida

Kim Dinkins, Policy and Planning Director

Apalachicola Riverkeeper

Cameron Baxley, Riverkeeper

Artisan of Seagrove Beach, Inc.

Peter M. Horn III., Chief Operating Officer

Bay and Reef of the Florida Keys

Captain Xavier Figueredo, Captain Elizabeth Jolin

Bear Warriors United

Katrina Shadix, Executive Director

Calusa Waterkeeper

Connie Ramos-Williams, Executive Director

Center for Biological Diversity

Ragan Whitlock, Staff Attorney

City of Seminole Community Garden

Mary Ann Kirk, Coordinator

Clean Water Coalition of Indian River County

Judy Orcutt, President

Conservation Science, Inc.

Reed Noss, Chief Scientist

Democratic Environmental Caucus of Florida

Judy Freiberg, Vice President

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society

Ann-Marie Wildman, Executive Director

Environment Florida

Mia McCormick, State Advocate

Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida

Becky Ayeach, President

Florida League of Women Voters

Cecile Scoon, ESQ., President

Florida Native Plant Society

Eugene Kelly, President

Florida Springs Council

Ryan Smart, Executive Director

Florida Voices for Animals

Myriam Parham, President

Friends of Biscayne Bay

Scott Pollowitz, Executive Coordinator

Friends of Split Oak Forest

Gretchen Robinson, Communications Secretary

Friends of St. Sebastian River

Tim Glover, President

Friends of the Everglades

Eve Samples, Executive Director

Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park

Julie Harrington, President

Gopher Tortoise Council

Kim Sash, Senior Co-Chair

Hold The Line Coalition

Laura Reynolds, Science Director

Humane Society of the United States

Kate MacFall, FL State Director

Indian Riverkeeper

Jim Moir, Riverkeeper and Executive Director

Indivisible FL13 Pinellas County

Cynthia Lippert, Organizer

Indivisible Mandarin

Gloria Einstein, Lead Coordinator

Ixia Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society

Jody Willis, President

Keep the Country, Inc.

Susan Schoettle-Gumm, President

Kissimmee Waterkeeper

John Capece, Waterkeeper

Lastra Life LLC

Randy Horton, Co-Owner

League of Humane Voters-FL

Marilyn Weaver, Executive Director

League of Women Voters of Alachua County

Janice Garry, President

Leon County Democratic Environmental Caucus

Claudia Sperbe, President

Lobby For Animals

Thomas Ponce, Founder/President

Matanzas Riverkeeper

Jen Lomberg, Esq., Executive Director and Riverkeeper

Miami Waterkeeper

Amanda Prieto, Chief Operating Officer

Mignot & Co.

Wendy Mignot, President

National Wildlife Federation

Joe Murphy, Wildlife Policy Specialist

Our Santa Fe River, Inc.

Joanne Tremblay, President

Physicians for Social Responsibility Florida

Pam McVety, Board Member

Progress Florida

Mark Ferrulo, Executive Director

Putnam Land Conservancy, Inc.

Willy the Losen, Chief Executive Officer/Conservation Director

Rainbow River Conservation

Gerald Rodgers, President

Raw and Juicy LLC

Jenifer Kuntz, Owner

Residents United for Rural Levy (RURL)

Laura Catlow

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation

Matt DePaolis, Environmental Policy Director

Savage Bell Productions

Savage Bell, Owner/Chief Executive Officer

Save the Manatee Club

Beth Brady, PhD, Senior Science and Conservation Associate

Sea Turtle Conservancy

Stacey Gallagher, Policy Coordinator

Seminole United Methodist Church Community Garden

Robert T. Huttick, Coordinator

Sierra Club Florida

Susannah Randolph, Chapter Director

Southeastern Center for Conservation

Jeff Talbert, Program Manager

Speak Up Wekiva, Inc.

Chuck O'Neal, President

St. Johns Riverkeeper

Lisa Rinaman, Riverkeeper

St. Mary's Riverkeeper

Emily Floore, Executive Director and Riverkeeper

START (Solutions To Avoid Red Tide)

Sandy Gilbert, Chairman/CEO

Stone Crab Alliance

Karen Dwyer, Ph.D., Co-founder

Suncoast Waterkeeper

Abbey Tyrna, Ph. D, Waterkeeper and Executive Director

Surfrider Foundation

Katie Bauman, Florida Policy Manager

The Downriver Project

Gil Damon, Director

The Environmental Conservancy of North Port, Inc.

Barbara Lockhart, President

The Guardians of Martin County

F. Anthony Zunino, President

The Paper Bear Inc.

Sean Couch, Co-Founder

Tropical Audubon Society

Lauren Jonaitis, Senior Conservation Director

Turtle Safe Products

Arix Zalace, Owner

VoteWater

Gil Smart, Executive Director

WIN with Integrity Coalition

Rob Piper, Chief Content Officer