

From: Dee Layne [mailto:deelayne@tampabay.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2009 12:15 PM
Subject: LEGISLATIVE SESSION - WETLANDS ALERT!
Importance: High

To All Who Understand the Value of our Wetland Systems: WATER!

(Please read article link: <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2009/mar/07/na-2-local-lawmakers-seek-to-end-epc/>)

For the 5th year in a row, Legislators have announced they will seek to abolish local control of wetlands permitting, especially by our Environmental Protection Commission. Who are this year's lucky sponsors of the amendment/bill? Why Hillsborough County's own Rep. Rich Glorioso [Glorioso, Richard \(R\)](#), and Rep. Faye Culp [Culp, Faye B. \(R\)](#) (These are the two links to their emails, if you wish to voice your comments now.)

Behind this initiative is Frank Matthews representing statewide development interests. This is the same attorney that came into Hillsborough County over a year ago and tried to abolish EPC through a number of the County Commissioners. As you know, the public's interest prevailed so far, but this is a very dangerous session. The Legislators are looking at putting Florida Forever on permanent hold to abolishing the Department of Community Affairs (our state's growth management watchdog) to waiving impact fees and concurrency for transportation and schools. All in the name of economic stimulus.

As Executive Director of Coalition 4 Responsible Growth, Inc., I am planning on traveling to Tallahassee during this session on some of these issues and will watch whatever amendments start coming out this week. I am hoping you all will email the appropriate Legislators when I send alerts to you to let your voices be heard.

If you would like to become a sponsor of C4RG, you will have a louder voice heard in Tallahassee – this is the 5th year we have been a community voice during session. Please email me and I will be happy to send you an application. These sponsorships pay for expenses associated with session, not as personal payment.

Hang on for the ride of your lives during the next two months while the Legislators are in session.

Thank you for caring about the environment and your community.

Sincerely,

Denise Layne
Executive Director
Coalition 4 Responsible Growth, Inc.
813-246-0485

ADDITIONAL ARTICLE FROM DENISE ON PAGE 2:

For the fifth year in a row, the Florida Legislature is attacking “local government” control of wetlands permitting, especially aiming at Hillsborough County’s Environmental Protection Commission (EPC). In the name of streamlining process, Legislators maintain that local wetland process duplicates other state agencies’ reviews, and a reason for the state’s economic crisis. Ha!

We in Hillsborough County learned last year there is no duplication between EPC and other agencies. And, there is no economic stimulus by eliminating local control of wetlands, only additional environmental damage that will have to be paid later at a much higher price.

In other growth-related issues, such as abolishing the Department of Community Affairs (the state’s growth management overseers), the Legislators are maintaining control of growth is best at the local level. So, why would this not apply to local review and control of wetlands? Isn’t the environment part of growth?

These are “smoke and mirror” arguments at best.

One of EPC’s goals has been one-stop permitting from federal, state and local agencies for wetlands in this county. All have delegated their review to EPC but one. For years the EPC has tried unsuccessfully to obtain review of wetlands from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. EPC meets all the state criteria. So, what is the reason for its refusal? Just, NO, they don’t have to. And that’s true. There are no enforceable laws requiring them to give up wetlands review even if the state’s criteria are met. Thus, the problem.

There is a very simple solution. The Commission and Legislators should support an amendment that assures a local government delegation of the review of wetlands by the state and water management districts if they meet the state’s criteria, as does our EPC. Passage of this amendment would mean that our EPC has finally achieved its goal of one-stop wetlands permitting in Hillsborough County. Talk about saving time and money!

What a wonderful win/win for this county if our Commissioners and our Legislators would provide the leadership in Tallahassee needed to help achieve true streamlining goals for its citizens. We can only hope.

Denise Layne
Executive Director
Coalition 4 Responsible Growth, Inc.
813-246-0485