



# SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION, INC

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August 2, 2016

Letter to those who love Florida

Greetings:

There are 20,636,975 residents in Florida according to the Census. The *Orlando Sentinel* recently reported; “*Despite the record year of 97.3 million tourists, Florida fell short of reaching Scott's goal of having 100 million tourists visit in 2014. Nearly 94 million people visited the state the previous year.*”<sup>[1]</sup> Residents plus tourists add up to almost 115,000,000 people impacted by the 3-2 vote of the Environmental Regulation Commission (ERC).

Florida's seafood and recreational fishing industries and myriad marine related businesses generate an economic impact worth tens of billions of dollars. All the marine industries of Florida are in jeopardy if our waters become further polluted by newly approved toxins, more toxic industrial wastes and unregulated water discharges. Besides the economic impact of dirty water, what are the social costs to the people and communities adversely impacted by dirty water?

The Florida Seafood Marketing Program touts the health benefits of eating seafood. This is recognized and promoted by the American Heart Association. It was disconcerting to read that the St. Johns Riverkeeper spokesman said, “*The more fish we eat, the more chemicals we ingest.*” What a detrimental statement for fishermen and the fishing industry. All fish were tarred in one inaccurate sentence.

The question from all Floridians should be; **Why should three unelected ERC commission members vote to increase the chance of getting cancer to 1 per 10,000 instead of the current 1 per 100,000? The goal should be reducing chance of getting cancer to 1 per 1,000,000 at least**

The answer; no appointee(s) should ever have that much unbridled authority. Anytime a dangerous or even potentially dangerous regulation is proposed affecting all the citizens, it should be determined through legislative action or plebiscite. Elected officials should never allow 3 appointees to pass a regulation that adversely impacts all the citizens.

The Chairperson of the Environmental Regulation Commission (ERC) said, “....., *I voted in favor of 39 new pollutant standards for chemicals that are currently unregulated and presumably currently harming the health of Floridians. If we had chosen to only adopt those rules that were new or became more stringent, the rules never would have been defensible in court.*”[2] We don’t know if that is accurate or not because we can’t predetermine what a court of competent jurisdiction would decide.

Were those 39 new pollutants allowed to be dumped into state waters legally before they were approved? It seems the ERC should be banning all toxins from being dumped into Florida waters. Why allow poison and carcinogens to ruin our waters in order for a business just to save money? Money is what this is all about. Money is what it is always about. Why treat “bad stuff” when it can be dumped into state waters at little cost. In the long run the cost to the general public’s health and our water-dependent industries are beyond the pale.

Panacea, Florida’s Jack Rudloe, a well-respected environmental activist, brought the problem home on a personal note in the *Tallahassee Democrat*, “*My late wife, Dr. Anne Rudloe, would have been at the meeting with me, testifying about the impacts of heavy metals on the marine environment and how toxins were killing off sea grass beds, which provides our seafood – but she died of cancer four years ago. She would have urged everyone to stand firm against the dark forces that are upon us.*”[3]

Southeastern Fisheries Association stands firm with Mr. Rudloe and all those interested in cleaning up Florida waters for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren. The time for change is now. Let’s get to work and remember, “All politics are local.’

Sincerely,

*Bob Jones*

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