

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 26, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

We're writing to alert you to our serious concerns with a problematic public health proposal in Florida that will soon be sent to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval.

Florida residents and tourists visit the state's numerous lakes and rivers to fish, boat, and swim. Our waterways are our way of life in Florida. That's why it is critically important that we ensure Florida's water quality standards preserve the health and safety of all users, especially vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, and people whose livelihoods rely on the water, such as commercial fishermen.

In May, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) initiated rulemaking to set new human health criteria regulations for 39 chemicals and to adjust the standards for 43 chemicals currently regulated by the state. The Florida Environmental Regulation Commission approved these standards today by a 3-2 vote.

While we support efforts to update the standards that were last approved in 1992, we are deeply concerned that the state is proposing to raise the allowable levels for dozens of chemicals, including more than half of the most dangerous cancer-causing chemicals in the proposal. In several instances, these proposed levels exceed EPA's recommendations.

In addition, there has not been sufficient opportunity for the public to review and comment on this highly technical proposal, despite the potentially serious consequences of setting inadequate standards.

Further, we are concerned that certain perspectives may not be fully represented in the state's proposal because two positions on the Florida Environmental Commission are currently vacant. Of note, the environmental seat and the local government seat are not filled and have been unoccupied for over a year.

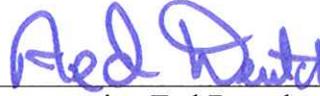
We urge you to provide a more appropriate public comment period for the proposal and to carefully evaluate each proposed human health criteria to ensure the utmost protection for our population, environment, and economy.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

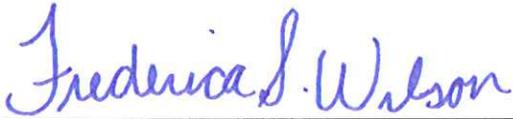
Sincerely,



Senator Bill Nelson



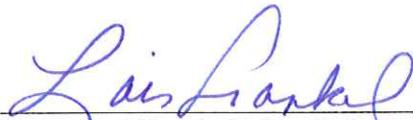
Representative Ted Deutch



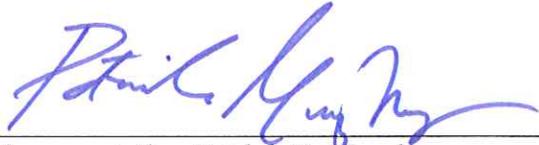
Representative Frederica S. Wilson



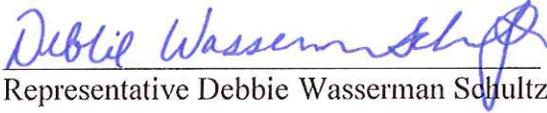
Representative Gwen Graham



Representative Lois Frankel



Representative Patrick E. Murphy



Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz



Representative Alcee L. Hastings



Representative Alan Grayson