



April 21, 2008

Senator Dave Aronberg
Room 405
Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Re: **Oppose SB 1376**

Dear Senator Aronberg:

On Earth Day we write to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1376 which seeks to preempt counties from enforcing wetland regulations over agricultural zoned lands.

We are concerned that the proposed amendment to the Agricultural Lands and Practices Act will not serve to protect agriculture in our state but is instead another effort to preempt local control over land use which places critical wetlands at risk. True agricultural operations recognize the value and service of wetlands and their function in climate moderation, irrigation and maintenance of the water table. This bill is not a protection for agriculture; it is an end run around wetland regulations and growth management.

Removing these wetland protections opens the door for development to bypass existing wetland rules in the same way that development avoids the DRI process. This ominous scenario has played out in our community. An Agricultural exemption is invoked, land has been wholesale cleared and filled burying gopher tortoises and wetlands without permits. Then the property is flipped to a new owner who rezones the property for residential development.

In addition, this bill could undermine Everglades Restoration and attempts to restore wetlands in the Kissimmee, Lake Okeechobee, EAA, Caloosahatchee and St Lucie systems. Please oppose this very bad bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rae Ann Wessel', is written over a large, loopy flourish.

Rae Ann Wessel
Natural Resource Policy Director