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May 18, 2011

Governor Rick Scott  
The Capitol PL 05  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

This letter is written on behalf of the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation and our 3000 members to urge you to use your veto authority to stop four bills passed by the legislature that are detrimental to Florida's economy, citizens and public interests.

The economy of Southwest Florida is built and dependent upon healthy, productive natural systems and sustainable growth. These elements that form the structure of our area community and contribute to the well being of our residents are threatened by the four bills outlined below.

**HB 7207 Growth Management** was proposed under the faulty presumption that the States growth management agency is holding back or impeding growth and development and elimination of the agency will spur growth and the economy. The facts simply do not bear this out. Statewide oversight of smart growth management has not stood in the way of development. Today, one in five homes is vacant and the state has a ten year surplus of commercial property all developed under a growth management system that coordinated how growth connected counties and accommodated and protected natural resources between municipalities and County's.

Markets bear out the fact that businesses and individuals gain economically and in quality of life from efforts that protect Florida's natural areas and critical resources. The value of businesses and homes increase when sustained growth is planned and our most critical natural resources are protected. Water is one of those critical resources. We cannot grow, let alone support current population without a protected supply of clean fresh water. And yet our state is suffering from one end to the other over shortages of supply and deteriorating water quality.

This bill eliminates the standards and important oversight of growth that has set this state apart in proactive planning that makes communities better because they are sustainable. And that translates to economic growth and jobs. Gutting this agency and removing the planning that citizens have developed over the years is a throwback to the days when lack of planning left us with conditions we are still trying to correct. This bill will not create jobs, it will however put our states natural resources at risk, encourage sprawl and reduce the input of citizens in exchange for planning by and for special interests.

**HB 421 Agricultural exemptions** to water management requirements was developed to bail out landowners who were cheating the system by destroying wetlands and altering water flow without permits. This bill establishes an unfair two tiered system with permit requirements for development but none for agriculture. Agriculture is currently exempted from water quality requirements and allowed to dump their stormwater on public waterways. If this bill stands they will be able to destroy wetlands, their functions, public benefits and wildlife habitat with impunity AND cause taxpayers to pay the costs to clean up the water and associated impacts. This bill will not create jobs and is detrimental to the economy as it shifts the costs and responsibilities from the landowner to the state (taxpayers).

**HB 993 Rulemaking** makes rulemaking less open to public and completely reverses the fundamental burden of proof process in permit challenges making it harder for citizens to challenge bad permits. This turnaround of the process does not serve the public interest because it severely limits the opportunity of current residents to have an effective say in the processes that affect their neighborhoods and communities most fundamentally. Poorly planned communities and shortsighted growth that impact fundamental resources do not translate to a robust economic future.

**SB 2142 Water Management Districts** allows the legislature to establish an annual cap on property tax collections for the states five water management districts independent of the current rate cap and gives the Legislature new line item veto powers over the District s budgets in addition to your veto authority. In the SFWMD the cap it would reduce the FY2012 budget by \$120 million. While there may be valid savings that can be accomplished in the operation of the agency our concern is that projects that affect the greatest number of people could be severely impacted or eliminated. The key to improving water supply and water quality in South Florida is dependent upon restoration of the greater Everglades.

We respectfully ask that you veto HB 7202, HB 421, HB 993 and SB 2142 to protect the public's economy and inheritance, its natural resources and to protect Florida's economy today in the future.

Sincerely,



Rae Ann Wessel  
Natural Resource Policy Director  
Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation