



July 2, 2008

Michael Zehr, Legislative Director
Office of Senator Mel Martinez
356 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Zehr:

Thank you for taking time to meet with us on June 19, 2008 during our visit to Washington for River Action Days. This letter is written to provide answers to the questions you raised regarding the Raw Sewage Right to Know Act, Senate Bill 2080, and to encourage Senator Martinez to take a leadership role in clean and healthy waters by becoming a co-sponsor of this bill.

Every year more than 850 billion gallons of sewage spill into the nations rivers, lakes and coastal waters, where the public recreates, fishing and swimming. The EPA estimates that 3.5 million people become ill every year from contact with water contaminated with bacteria, parasites and viruses from sewage. The public health costs are in the billions of dollars. Clean water should not be a political issue. This bill is important for Florida and all Americans by proving public notification when sewage spills occur.

The following paragraphs respond to your specific questions regarding what additional burden this would cause EPA and what financial impact it would have on States.

As for the involvement of EPA, the substitute version approved by the House adds a section that clarifies EPA will need to do rulemaking to establish guidance. The EPA does a lot of rulemaking, so this is not a major burden for them. Once the rules are in place the States will incorporate specific provisions into their existing permit process.

As for the impact on States, the language of the bill provides a lot of discretion to the States and makes available funding through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Provisions of this bill will add notification requirements into permits the State is already issuing. Public notification – such as posting signs, radio ads, website, etc. - is very inexpensive and a tiny portion of a systems overall operations and maintenance costs.

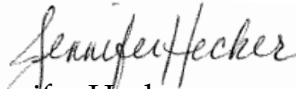
In addition, public notification should result in a reduction in a State's health care costs. As for monitoring for sewage overflows, the bill makes money available for monitoring systems through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, it does not require high-tech expensive monitoring but rather allows use of a "methodology, technology or management program" to alert the operator of spills - allowing operators to use what works best.

I hope this addresses your questions regarding this important bill. We would be pleased to work with your office on technical as well as policy issues to help understand the implications of this bill for Florida. We encourage the Senator to become a co sponsor of this bill to would be happy to work with your office to

Sincerely,



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