

May 12, 2023

To: Hernando County Board of County Commissioners

20 N Main St # 460, Brooksville, FL 34601
Brooksville, FL 34604

Via email to planning@hernandocounty.us and administration@hernandocounty.us

RE: Please Keep Hernando County's Strong Rainy Season Fertilizer Ban

Dear Chair Hawkins and Commissioners,

We, the undersigned local business owners, managers, and employees, property owners, and residents urge you to keep Hernando County's current strong urban fertilizer ordinance intact. Weakening or removing the strict June through September (rainy season) nitrogen and phosphorus application ban—the backbone of effective urban fertilizer management—would be a step backward in the county's endeavor to create a prosperous community for working people, retirees, and visitors.

The rainy season application ban helps prevent nutrient pollution runoff and leaching during the summer when heavy rains are common. Without it, fertilizer from lawns and landscapes washes into our springs, rivers, and estuaries fueling harmful algae blooms that threaten tourism, property values, and small businesses—the bases of our local economy.

A healthy Weeki Wachee River attracts tourists who spend their hard-earned money on hotels, local Airbnb and VRBO rentals, meals at our restaurants, and recreational activities like paddling, scalloping, and fishing. Our water-based attractions are also key to keeping property values strong, which not only serves the interests of property owners, but also our county's ability to collect and spend tax revenues on essential services to keep Hernando County a lovely place to live.

It only takes one toxic algae outbreak, manatee mortality event, fish kill, or mass seagrass dieoff to damage Hernando's reputation and drive visitors elsewhere.

We all benefit when we stop pollution at its source. Preventing urban fertilizer pollution is far cheaper, easier, and more effective than trying to clean up waterways after the damage is done. The strict rainy season ban is a low-cost, proven tool used in over a hundred other communities across Florida over the past 18 years.

Please stay the course. Don't weaken the rainy season ban. Keep Hernando's fertilizer ordinance strong—for our springs, our economy, and our quality of life.

Sincerely,

Bayport Enterprises

Jeff Ruggiero, Owner

Bayport Inn Restaurant

Monique Pogolak, Manager

Brian's Place Restaurant

Brian Alvarez, Owner

Broad Street Brewing Co.

Tanya Myers, Owner

Buy & Sell with Paul, LLC

Paul Sturdgess-Hayes, Managing
Member

Canal Side Market & Deli

Nikki Hart, Owner

**Creative Environmental Solutions,
Inc.**

George Foster, President

Experience Weeki

Kelly and David Winterling, Owners

Florida Native Plant Society

Eugene Kelly, President

Florida Springs Council

Ryan Smart, Executive Director

Florida Springs Passport

Danielle Cecil, Owner

Foster's Roofing

John Foster, Owner

Get Up and Go Kayaking

Weeki Wachee, Taylor Masnjak, Owner

**Get Up and Go Kayaking—the
Chazz**

Austin Adkins, Owner

Get Up Go Kayaking

Justin Buzzi, Founder & CEO

Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Jon Thaxton, Director of Community
Investment

Healthy Gulf

Martha Collins, Executive Director

Hernando Audubon

Tom St. Clair, PhD, President &
Conservation Chair

Hernando Beach Marina

Bill Jay, General Manager

Hernando Beach Tropical Grille

Cheryl Peloquin, Owner

**Hernando Chapter Florida Native
Plant Society**

Renee Holcomb, President

**Hernando Environmental Land
Protectors (HELP)**

Shelly Brown, President

Marina Rose Cruises

Patrick and Sheryl Coggins, Owners

Mary's Fish Camp

Blair Hensley, Managing Member

McLeod Real Estate

Dylan McLeod, Owner

My Round Boat

Marousa Placiotis Rodriguez, Owner

Natalie Kahler Consulting

Natalie Kahler, Owner

National Wildlife Federation

Joe Murphy, Wildlife Policy Specialist

Pine Island Property Owners Association

Joe Crawford, President

Save the Manatee Club

Beth Brady, PhD, Director of Science and Conservation

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group

DeeVon Quirolo, Chair

Sierra Club Florida

Michael McGrath, Lead Organizer

Southern Slam Outfitters

Captain Carey Gibson, Owner

SUP Weeki

Pam & Jerry Napp, Owners

Toner & Ramirez

Tracy Ramirez, Esq., Partner

Trader Bay Seafood Company

Antonia Webe, Owner

Treelawn Builders

Paul Beasley, Owner

Veterans of Foreign Wars "VFW" Post 9236

Jason Spencer, Commander

Weeki Wachee Area Club, Inc.

Mary Ann Johnson, President

Weeki Wachee Area Watch

Stephanie Kozuch, President

Weeki Wachee River Rescue Team

Roy Johnson, President

Weeki Wachee Swamp Festival, Inc.

Karen Smythe

Weeki Wachee Vacation Rentals

Brianna Murphy, Owner

WellCome OM Integral Healing & Education Center

Lenora Singh, Events Coordinator

Gary Kuhl, former Hernando County Administrator

Sonny Vergara