



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John Peyton, Mayor

June 4, 2009

Office of Governor Charlie Crist
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor Crist:

It is with great urgency that I ask you to veto SB 2080. It was well intended legislation that has become a potential barrier to the openness and transparency of government in the State of Florida. If this bill becomes law it will give just five people the power to implement water use policy. This is too much authority for the directors of the state's five water management districts to wield. Water management district board members would be mere figureheads with only the director having any binding decision making power.

For example, had this bill already been law, the City of Jacksonville and other interested third parties would have been prevented from voicing their opposition to the St. Johns River Water Management District over the proposed Seminole County water withdrawal permit. As water issues grow in importance, these decisions have to be made through a vote and in the sunshine. All voices and opinions must be heard so that solid decisions can be made.

The bill that is before you was passed late in the legislative session after damaging amendments had been tacked on that thwart the bill's original intent. Moreover, these troubling amendments were not vetted in the committee process. As passed, this bill would eliminate the checks and balances now in place when a water management district decides consumptive use permits and variances. It seriously damages the public trust placed in the water management district concept.

As passed, SB 2080 is a dangerous piece of legislation that poses risks to the rivers, lakes and wetlands throughout Florida. Your requested veto would not only stop this bill from becoming law but will send a message that Florida is serious about the preservation of its water resources and the importance of openness and transparency of government.

Sincerely,

John Peyton
Mayor

cc: Kathy Mears
Diana Sawaya-Crane

