



EVERGLADES COALITION

May 13, 2022

Governor Ron DeSantis
The Florida Capitol
400 S. Monroe St., Plaza Level
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Sent Via Email to GovernorRon.Desantis@eoq.myflorida.com

RE: VETO SB 2508

Dear Governor DeSantis:

On behalf of the Everglades Coalition, a coalition devoted to restoration, preservation, and protection of the Greater Everglades, we write to ask you to veto Senate Bill 2508, which would preserve the status quo that has led to toxic algae blooms in Florida.

Your strong response to SB 2508 after it was filed in February led to the removal of some, but not all, of the damaging elements of this bill. We remain concerned about the following provisions of the bill:

- SB 2508 will protect the harmful “hold and dump” practices of the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule by requiring the South Florida Water Management District to get legislative approval in order to update its water-cutback rules, 40E-21 and 40E-22. These rules are outdated and do not allow for maximum flexibility to protect environmental resources including the Everglades and northern estuaries.
- SB 2508 allows public entities, including utilities, to pay the Florida Department of Environmental (FDEP) Protection to expedite review of wetland “dredge and fill” permits. Making utilities paying customers of FDEP could accelerate the destruction of wetlands and create negative impacts on water quality.
- Gives new authority to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to purchase lands through the Rural and Family Lands program, rather than simply approving conservation easements, which keep special agricultural lands in production and on the tax rolls. This new land-buying authority could compete with the underfunded Department of Environmental Protection Florida Forever land-acquisition program.

We appreciate your commitment to our state’s water resources, as well as your swift public response to SB 2508 when it was filed as a budget-conforming bill in February. Both the substance of this bill and the manner in which it was filed — limiting public input on substantial environmental policy measures — remain a grave concern.

The Everglades Coalition is a 501(c)3 alliance of local, state, and national conservation organizations dedicated to the full protection and restoration of America's Everglades.

evergladescoalition.org

For the good of America's Everglades, we respectfully ask that you VETO SB 2508.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark Perry in black ink.

Mark Perry
Co-Chair

Handwritten signature of Kelly Cox in black ink.

Kelly Cox
Co-Chair

The Everglades Coalition is a 501(c)3 alliance of local, state, and national conservation organizations dedicated to the full protection and restoration of America's Everglades.

evergladescoalition.org