

**COMMITTEE OF THE ISLANDS
P.O.BOX 88
SANIBEL, FLORIDA 33957**

January 11, 2008

The Honorable Charlie Crist
The Capital
400 South Main Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Re: Fertilizer Task Force objectives

Dear Governor Crist;

Committee of the Islands is a Florida not for profit corporation dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life on the islands of Sanibel and Captiva and to safeguarding the unique environmental quality of the islands.

We are particularly proud of the leadership role the Sanibel City Council has played in adopting an ordinance which will minimize the detrimental effects of fertilizer run off into our surrounding waters. That ordinance addresses local problems unique to a barrier island community which may not be shared by other localities.

What concerns us today is that the Task Force which was set up at the state level, primarily for the purpose of reducing the adverse impact of fertilizers on water quality, may be straying from its mission. The idea of a model state law favored by the fertilizer industry could seriously impede local efforts to deal with the potentially devastating effects of fertilizer generated water quality degradation, if it is not based on sound science and fails to include a. a rainy season blackout period, b. at least a 10 foot barrier between fertilized area and adjacent surface water and c. limitations on nitrogen and phosphorous content.

While an appropriately drafted model law based on sound science might prove helpful to some localities, it should not be forced upon local communities by way of preemption. Barrier islands like Sanibel and Captiva have an entirely different set of fertilizer related issues to deal with than inland communities with no nearby water bodies. In addition to the presence of surface water on all sides, soil characteristics are also likely to be different on sandy island soils as compared to the more traditional top soils found in interior locals. Preemption would simply not allow the most effective action to be taken at the local level based on local hydrological and geological characteristics.

We urge you to use the weight of your office to assure that the Fertilizer Task Force remains true to its mission and makes recommendations or drafts legislation based on sound science and allows local governments to take such measures as they deem necessary to address the problems associated with fertilizer run off unimpeded by preemption.

Very truly yours,

Lawrence M. Schopp
President