

For More Information:

Kirsten Borman
850-521-1273
Cell: 850-241-3496
kborman@flchamber.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FLORIDA CHAMBER STATEMENT ON NUMERIC NUTRIENT STANDARDS

New EPA Regulations Harm Consumers, Businesses and Future Economic Growth

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (November 12, 2009) - The Florida Chamber of Commerce is deeply concerned about proposed new regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which would unfairly impose costly new standards and cause direct harm to Florida consumers and businesses.

In January 2009, the U.S. EPA Administrator issued a letter to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) requiring Florida to adopt numeric nutrient criteria standards or EPA would establish federal criteria for the state.

The new standards from the EPA would impose regulations on Florida flowing waters that are far in excess of anything even being contemplated in any other state, drastically increasing costs for all consumers. EPA's proposed regulations would create an enormous unfunded mandate to Florida, resulting in increased costs that will be passed along to small employers and consumers when they can least afford it.

The Florida Chamber recognizes that the economic impact of these regulations could be enormous and devastating for Florida's transitioning economy. These proposed new standards, in some cases up to 14 times more restrictive than current advanced wastewater treatment standards, will not only affect water utilities, but will also be applied to any discharges of water, such as drainage systems and irrigation ditches.

Standards will also be applied to "artificial water bodies" such as retention lakes, agricultural holding ponds, canals and reservoirs, making it technically and economically impossible to maintain and operate such water infrastructure facilities for public welfare, the generation of electricity, the production of food and other goods and services. The total cost of compliance with these regulations are likely to stretch into the tens of billions of dollars, dramatically increasing the average household's monthly water bill and further straining the typical small business' budget.

Florida cannot afford to be the nation's test case for federally imposed numeric nutrient standards, which have been proven to dramatically increase costs without producing a tangible environmental benefit.

We strongly urge Florida's elected leaders to intervene on behalf of Florida's businesses and consumers.

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Established in 1916 as Florida's first statewide business advocacy organization, the Florida Chamber of Commerce is the state's largest federation of employers, chambers of commerce and associations, representing more than 139,000 employers. The Chamber works within all branches of government to affect those changes set forth in the annual Florida Business Agenda, and which are seen as critical to the continued improvement of Florida's business environment. Visit www.FloridaChamber.com.