

LEGISLATIVE ALERT – THREE LOCAL BILLS COULD UNINTENTIONALLY (INTENTIONALLY?) HARM EPC (Environmental Protection Commission)

PLEASE ATTEND THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION HEARING – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7TH AT 9:00 AM AT COUNTY CENTER, 26TH FLOOR

Contact: Denise Layne
Coalition 4 Responsible Growth, Inc.
813-246-0485
www.c4rq.com

(Prior to the Dec. 7th hearing, please email your legislators voicing your concerns and ask them to vote NO if they won't withdraw or table these three bills. All 16 Legislative Delegates can be contacted through Candace Hundley – MAKE SURE YOU PUT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS IN THE EMAILS:

Hundleyc@HillsboroughCounty.ORG. PLEASE CC ME ON ALL EMAILS, AND I WILL MAKE SURE THEY ARE PRESENTED AT THE HEARING AS WELL!)

LOCAL BILL #1: (ASK THE DELEGATION TO VOTE “NO”)

Rep. Kevin Ambler is sponsoring Bill #1, changing the boards of EPC, Planning Commission and Sports Authority (this is a repeat of last years' mess). All boards would be represented based on population giving Hillsborough County 5 seats, City of Tampa 2 seats, and 1 seat each to Temple Terrace and Plant City. **Our BOCC voted to oppose the EPC and Planning Commission boards being toyed with changing only the Sports Authority board. However, there are no amendments filed as yet changing the legislation.**

LOCAL BILL #3: (ASK THE DELEGATION TO VOTE “NO”)

Rep. Rich Glorioso is sponsoring Bill #3, at the request of Councilwoman, Mary Mulhern, which changes **only** the board of the EPC – 4 seats for Hillsborough County, 3 seats for the City of Tampa, and 1 seat each for Temple Terrace and Plant City. Although we all would like to see all jurisdictions represented, the timing of this bill is such that it will become the conduit for “other” interests to try and “fix” various parts of the EPC enabling act. Unfortunately, this bill will NOT remain solely changing the EPC board. We hope Mary Mulhern will bring this

back at a later date – we need equity on the EPC board. **Our BOCC voted to oppose this local bill as well.**

LOCAL BILL #4: (ASK THE DELEGATION TO VOTE “NO”)

Rep. Rich Glorioso is also sponsoring Bill #4, WHICH EXEMPTS ALL AGRICULTURAL LANDS FROM WETLAND REVIEW BY THE EPC. No more ¼ or ½ acre wetlands will be reviewed in this county on agricultural lands. There is no mention of bona fide farms, just ag lands. Every community has plenty of land zoned agricultural right now that are NOT farms. The State of Florida will have full control and review. This bill throws our local control under the bus! **Even our BOCC voted to oppose this bill realizing that this would take away the EPC's local control over all wetlands on agricultural lands in Hillsborough County.**

We are still working on the EPC wetland rule to help our REAL farmers cut through red tape. On November 15th, our EPC Commission unanimously voted to continue the work on the wetland rule for agriculture. They wisely opted for the technical committee and stakeholder committee to review the rule, and also continue working with the public. The new rule will be back for their January, 2008, meeting. Thanks to all who took the time to contact the commissioners to voice your opinion on this rule not being ready to adopt. However, we need to keep working on this rule!

It is obvious that the real intention of these bills is to get review of Ag lands out of the hands of our local EPC. If any of the EPC bills survive, than it is guaranteed that this ag land exemption bill #4 will be amended onto it. This means that we will now have to fight the entire state-wide agricultural lobbying industry during the 2008 session in Tallahassee (they have 400 lobbyists at times in Tally) to protect our wetlands in Hillsborough County.

You do NOT need to sign up ahead of time to speak at the Legislative Delegations' meeting. **You sign up to speak when you arrive at the hearing.** Each bill will be called up and you may address it at that time.

Here is the site where you can view these local bills
<http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/legislativedelegation/regularsession/>