

Environmental Sustainability

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AIF's Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC) was created to address environmental issues and educate policy makers about their impact on Florida's economic & natural environment. For the 2012 Legislative Session, the Council will support the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) efforts to streamline and improve many of the environmental regulations under their purview. Under the new leadership of Secretary Herschel Vinyard, the DEP has made significant strides in working with employers and being more consumer friendly. One of their legislative priorities — the adoption of a statewide Environmental Resource Permit — will be one of the Council's top priorities this year.

The ESC is also working on several major water policy changes. The impact of proposed federal water quality standards known as Numeric Nutrient Criteria will affect every major industry and the public. The ESC has been a leader in working with Florida's state and federal elected officials on efforts to mitigate these incredibly expensive and arbitrary water quality standards. AIF will be strongly advocating for the ratification of the Numeric Nutrient Criteria Rule developed by DEP.

Council Priorities

Water Quality

- Encourage Florida's state and federal elected officials to oppose the enactment of unscientific numeric nutrient content levels in Florida's waterbodies.

Water Supply

- Support the extension of consumptive use permits for alternative water supply from 20 to 30 years for Florida's water utilities.
- Encourage the Legislature to appropriate state funds for alternative water supply programs. These funds are matched by water management districts and local utilities.
- Support FDEP's effort to develop a statewide, goal-based water conservation program.

Regulatory Reform

- Streamline permits to give businesses much needed regulatory relief and reform the regulatory permitting processes within local government, water management districts, and the DEP.
- Support proposal to have a statewide Environmental Resource Permit (ERP)

Recycling

- AIF supports recycling efforts by expanding existing recycling businesses in Florida, as well as recruiting new businesses to our state.
- Oppose efforts to enact a tax on plastic bags.
- Oppose "bottle bill" legislation or any solid waste disposal tax.

Fertilizer

- Support exemptions for commercial fertilizer applicators from local government ordinances.

Contamination Notification

- Oppose the expansion of the current contamination notification law.

Council Position

Environmental issues such as recycling, water quality, water supply, and product stewardship are of immense importance to the business community. These issues impact businesses every day and nearly every industry is affected. Despite these implications, proposed efforts seek to tighten water quality criteria, tax retail plastic bags, and implement beverage container deposit laws that may hurt current recycling efforts. Clearly, such a regulatory climate will put Florida in a severely disadvantaged position, compared to other states, when it comes to retaining or attracting businesses.

Chair: Doug Mann • Lobbyist: Keyna Cory