

THE SLUDGE REPORT www.thesludgereport.org

WHO WE ARE: We are a growing coalition of Homeowners, Homeowner Associations, septic industry professionals, support organizations such as Coalition for Property Rights, Home Builders Association, Orlando Regional Realtors Association, and others allied with our position – that sound science, property rights, and financial justification warrant action or inaction as evidenced by proof of need and reliable predictions of effectiveness. The Sludge Report is followed by citizens all over the State of Florida, and those citizens are active in their local areas informing others and recruiting supporters.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR:

- Engaged our legislators regarding the 2009 Dept. of Health Rule mandating Performance Based Septic systems in the Wekiva Study Area (WSA), and the Springs Protection Bill SB274 which introduced the same mandates as the DOH rule. Both were defeated.
- Engaged our legislators over 2010's SB550 and over funding of the Dept. of Health's Phase II Study that would test septic system alternatives as well as the suitability and cost- effectiveness of PBTS. SB550 was effectively re-written so that it contained no mandates other than normal maintenance provisions of inspection and periodic pump outs. Grants are available for low income residents. SB 550 passed containing provisions regarding water quality and water resource development that may be interpreted or implemented in such a way that septic system costs, and municipal water and sewer rates will climb exponentially. We and our associate groups will be monitoring this closely, as will our legislators.
- DOH Bureau of On-Site Sewage developed SB550 inspection rules that virtually guaranteed homeowners septic systems would fail inspections and incur huge inspection costs. Active protests and constant pressure lead to a Special Legislative Session voting to delay inspections until the new session.
- 2011 Legislative Session is constantly being monitored for introduction and progress of legislation to repeal and replace the inspection provisions of SB550. Citizens are active contacting legislators and attending committee hearings on all bills related to our septic systems.

WHAT'S LOOMING ON THE HORIZON: The EPA was sued by Earth Justice representing four Florida Environmental Groups: Florida Wildlife Federation, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Sierra Club, St. John's Riverkeeper, and the Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida. Earth Justice claimed Florida was in violation of the "Clean Water Act." Rather than involve itself in a lawsuit, the EPA settled with Earth Justice, and is now embarking on setting numeric nutrient standards for Florida's waters of all kinds, including ditches. The standards have been labeled as "unachievable" no matter how much of our money is thrown at the issue. The estimated cost to taxpayers is predicted to be in the billions of dollars. Our legislators can tell you that this is an issue of mind-boggling proportions, and the financial well-being and economic future of our state is at stake. The science behind EPA's proposed numeric standards is in question, as it is at the state level within the Dept. of Environmental Protection, where numeric nutrient standards have been pursued through their regional Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) committees. This will be important to follow, and we will be doing just that. The State of Florida and several corporations and associations have filed a counter-suit challenging the EPA settlement.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Be a frequent visitor to the website: www.thesludgereport.org.
- Click on "Contact Us". Send in your e-mail contact information to receive e-mail alerts.
- Forward e-mail alerts to all you know and ask them to do the same. We count on the growing numbers of represented homeowners to make our voices heard. We need to do this statewide.
- Download this fact sheet and pass it to those who have questions, or should have questions!
- Find your legislator(s) contact information, keep in constant touch with them and make sure you know where they stand on our issue.
- Thank those legislators who have taken the time to understand the issues, and work on your behalf.

This is a grassroots web site, not financially supported by any organization. The Sludge Report is non-political, so efforts engage our legislators, but no candidate or office holder is endorsed by this publication.

Questions or comments to: email@thesludgereport.org

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