



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Rick Scott
Governor

Jennifer Carroll
Lt. Governor

Herschel T. Vinyard Jr.
Secretary

June 10, 2011

Mr. Neil Armingeon
St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc.
2800 University Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32211

HAND DELIVERED

Dear Neil,

We understand from the recent e-mail campaign to your members that you believe the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has not adequately listened to your concerns or provided answers to your questions regarding the Georgia Pacific (GP) pipeline issue. Let me assure you, DEP and I, personally, appreciate the role you play in the protection and restoration of the St. Johns River and value your input in the pipeline matter.

You were one of the first people I met with after I was appointed Secretary earlier this year. At that time, I encouraged you to reach out to me directly if you had any concerns with DEP. That offer still stands.

As you know, DEP is bound by the Administrative Law Judge's order issued in 2002 requiring GP to make substantial manufacturing upgrades, monitor water quality to measure the results of those upgrades and construct the pipeline if water quality standards could not be met in Rice Creek. GP then spent approximately \$200 million to improve the mill and its effluent. Hundreds of pages of data and water quality reports submitted by GP in 2008 and 2010 confirm that, while GP has made significant improvements to its discharge, it cannot meet water quality standards for color and conductivity (salinity) in Rice Creek. (Because of its facility upgrades, GP's discharge already is well below state requirements for nutrient levels. Thus, GP should not be the cause of the river's algal blooms.)

You have asserted for quite some time that an alternative to the pipeline exists - one that would allow GP to continue to discharge its wastewater in Rice Creek, and meet all water quality standards in that creek. Because of the respect I have for you, your organization and the river, I directed DEP Northeast District staff to meet with you and

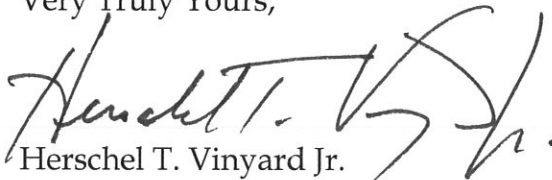
your consultant. As a result, DEP met with you and your consultant on three separate occasions: February 23, March 24 and April 4, 2011. DEP's experienced engineers and scientists concluded that nothing presented during any of these meetings substantiated the claim that there is another viable alternative to relocating the discharge. Despite that fact, I am willing to have DEP's District and Tallahassee personnel meet with you and your consultants again if you have concrete evidence that an alternative exists.

DEP has thoroughly examined GP's application to renew its industrial wastewater permit and relocation of the facility's discharge from Rice Creek to the St. Johns River. DEP staff has worked diligently to identify (as have you and GP) viable alternatives to the pipeline since 2002, and reviewed numerous studies and a stack of research more than four feet high. Nevertheless, DEP District staff continues to have discussions about GP's permit application to identify other solutions.

Neil, I believe as you do, that the St. Johns River is critical to the quality of life and economic viability of Northeast Florida. I do not take this issue lightly and consider it one of DEP's most important decisions. If there is an alternative to the pipeline that meets the judge's requirements established for DEP and GP, we are eager to hear it.

There is not a better advocate for the St. Johns River than you. As someone who spends more than 20 weekends out of the year on the river with my family, I appreciate your passion and concern for such a wonderful and unique resource. I look forward to working collaboratively with you as we identify solutions that ensure the future health of both the river and Rice Creek.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herschel T. Vinyard Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Herschel T. Vinyard Jr.
Secretary