



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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Rick Scott
Governor

Jennifer Carroll
Lt. Governor

Herschel T. Vinyard Jr.
Secretary

TO: George Roberts, Chair NFWFMD
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FROM:  Melissa L. Meeker, Deputy Secretary
Water Policy & Ecosystem Projects

DATE: April 25, 2011

SUBJECT: Lobbying and Contacts with State and Federal Agencies

The Governor's April 12 letter to Secretary Vinyard made clear his expectation that the Water Management Districts would coordinate with the Department, in advance of taking positions on "issues having implications on policy or budgetary matters concerning the State's water resources." This expectation encompasses a variety of issues, including lobbying at the state and federal levels and interactions with state and federal resource agencies.

While I recognize that legislative matters move quickly, coordination is critical. In order to ensure consistency and provide policy direction it is important that ideas are presented early and that we collectively have the same position.

With respect to these matters, the following guidance applies:

- Lobbying - Please coordinate in advance with the Department's Office of Legislative Affairs on all proposals for legislation, including draft legislative language, and all contacts with members of Congress or the Florida Legislature on legislative and related policy matters. If advance coordination is not possible, please advise the Office of Legislative Affairs immediately afterward. That office will coordinate with me. I have asked the Department's Legislative Affairs Director to reinforce this expectation with your legislative offices.

In addition I ask that you please keep track of legislative/congressional constituent and member issues. It will be helpful to have this information to determine whether there are patterns that suggest changes in how we implement various aspects of our programs.

- Interaction with federal and state agencies – Please submit to my office, all drafts, of proposed letters to these agencies or pending legal matters, whether unsolicited or in response to requests by the agencies. Include necessary background information and timing considerations. My office will respond promptly with any guidance.
 - Please also advise, preferably in advance, of discussions with state or federal agency staff on significant issues affecting state water policy or pending legal matters.
 - This guidance does not apply to day-to-day interactions on WMD projects that have already been approved by the Department or the routine commenting by federal and state agencies on items such as ERPs and CUPs.

I believe more direct coordination on these issues will result in more effective resource protection and strengthen our ability to implement statewide programs. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 850-245-2029 or via email at Melissa.Meecker@dep.state.fl.us.

cc: Jennifer Fitzwater, Chief of Staff
Jon Steverson, Director of Legislative Affairs
Bonnie Hazelton, Ombudsman