

EPA Announces Short Extension for Florida Nutrients Inland Water Rule

Proposed, cost-effective, rule to curb health and economic impacts of nutrient pollution

Contact Information: Dawn Harris-Young, (404) 562-8327, harris-young.dawn@epa.gov

(ATLANTA – Sept. 29, 2010) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has requested, and the plaintiffs have agreed, to a 30-day extension for a final decision on the Florida Inland Water numeric nutrients rule from October 15, 2010 to November 14, 2010. To date, EPA has received over 22,000 comments as a result of two public comment periods and 13 public hearing sessions in the State of Florida. These comments represent essential input from many Floridians and a valuable range of information from numerous technical and scientific experts in the State. EPA will use this additional time to review and confirm that all comments have been fully considered.

The cost-effective rule is meant to protect people's health, aquatic life and the long-term recreational uses of Florida's waters. Clean and safe water are central to people's health and Florida's economic growth. The new date for final signature date would be November 14, 2010.

The final action will set numeric nutrient water quality standards for nitrogen and phosphorus, also known as "nutrients," that would be allowed in Florida's lakes, rivers, streams, springs and canals. Nitrogen and phosphorus pollution come from stormwater runoff, municipal wastewater treatment, fertilization of crops and livestock manure.

Nutrient pollution can damage drinking water sources; increase exposure to harmful algal blooms, which are made of toxic microbes that can cause damage to the nervous system or even death; and from byproducts in drinking water from disinfection chemicals, some of which have been linked with serious human illnesses like bladder cancer.