

# **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\* Update on Septic Systems and 2010 Legislation**

Dear Friend,

As many of you know, Senate bill 550 passed the Legislature at the end of Session and is yet to be presented to the Governor. While this bill originally infringed on your rights as homeowners, I'd like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the septic situation in our community, what SB 550 means for you, and update you on an upcoming conference call.

Although your leaders who represent the Wekiva Basin were not particular pleased with this legislation, there were programs that needed to be addressed by the Legislature. The bill provides for specific standards that central wastewater facilities and septic tanks need to meet in the Florida Keys and provides for the bonding authority for this to be accomplished. The legislation also provides for clarified requirements for consumptive use permits by Water Management Districts and calls for 10 year reviews for these permits rather than the current 5 year reviews. Additionally, SB 550 provides legislative findings regarding the E.P.A.'s numeric nutrient criteria and the potential economic impact that this rulemaking could have on the state of Florida. We have been singled out as the only state to bear the brunt of this potentially devastating rule. Senate Bill 550 primarily provides that the State Board Administration would be able to provide funding for alternative water supply projects that also include conservation projects.

SB 550 establishes a statewide septic tank inspection program. This program would be on a 5 year rotating basis to be fully implemented by 2014 that would determine if septic systems are operating properly. Please note that no nutrient criteria are included in this legislation for septic systems to meet, which is certainly a positive for our homeowners. SB 550 also establishes a grant program for low-income owners of septic tanks to assist costs associated with inspections, pump outs, repairs, and replacements; at present, however, there are no allocations or funding sources available for this program. This legislation also directs the Department of Environmental Protection to submit a report to the Governor and Legislature on the effects of reclaimed water use by February 1, 2012. For the Wekiva Parkway, clarification is provided for the use of mitigation banking credits in the basin.

As you can see, this is a small victory for our cause. While this legislation originally started off as something completely disagreeable to our community, the compromise that has been reached is tolerable. Furthermore, specific proviso language was included as **Line Item 486** in the state budget that reads the following:

"From the funds in Specific Appropriation 486, \$2,000,000 from the Grants and Donations Trust Fund is provided to the department to continue phase II and complete the study authorized in Specific Appropriation 1682 of chapter 2008-152, Laws of Florida. The report shall include recommendations on passive strategies for nitrogen reduction that complement use of conventional onsite wastewater treatment systems. The department shall submit an interim report of phase II on February 1, 2011, a subsequent status report on May 16, 2011, and a final report upon completion of phase II to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives prior to proceeding with any nitrogen reduction activities."

However, I urge you to remain vigilant about this issue. On Friday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, there will be a conference call with the Department of Health that will touch on the following topics: onsite sewage treatment and disposal system design, permitting, construction, modification, repair and maintenance; system evaluation; standards for existing systems; grants for repairs to systems of low-income homeowners; septic Tank Contractor registration, training and standards of practice; Septage treatment and disposal; and performance-based treatment standards. If you would like to listen in to this call, please use the following information: Conference Call: 1(888)808-6959, Conference Code: 2454070#. I will be on this conference call and urge you to do the same if your schedule permits. if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (407) 884-2023.

**As always, it is an honor to serve you.**

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

State Representative Bryan Nelson  
District 38