

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



PRESS CONTACT

Jim Beaver

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
239-338-2550 ext. 224

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Opposes Preemption of Local Fertilizer Regulations

FORT MYERS, FL – (March 22, 2011) – The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) unanimously voted to ask state legislators to oppose House Bill 457 (HB 457) and Senate Bill 606 (SB 606) which would preempt the authority of local governments regarding fertilizer regulations. The bills would nullify numerous existing fertilizer regulations developed in accordance with current State standards and based on local conditions. Council Chair Charles “Chuck” Kiester sent a letter to legislative leaders detailing the economic, environmental and scientific reasons to oppose preemption of local governments’ authority to protect valuable water resources and the thousands of jobs associated with the tourism, fisheries, and development industries associated with excellent water quality, clean beaches and a healthy environment.

Within the SWFRPC region, local governments consider the regulation of residential fertilizer to be one of the important tools available to assist in protecting water quality in aquatic preserves, national estuaries, coastal estuarine waters and natural wetlands, and waterbodies that have naturally low levels of nutrients.

The SWFRPC board consists of 25 city and county elected officials from Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota counties and 10 voting gubernatorial appointees from throughout the region, plus five ex-officio (non-voting) members representing state agencies, water districts and economic development interests. In 2007 the SWFRPC adopted a fertilizer resolution to promote a consistent approach to protecting water quality through fertilizer regulations throughout the region. The standards suggested in the regional resolution, which are stricter than those that would be allowed under HB 457 and SB 606, went through an extensive scientific vetting process involving the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Services Cooperative Extension, and other stakeholders including representatives of local and statewide fertilizer businesses.

###