

October 26, 2011

Senator Charles S. Dean, Sr.
405 Tompkins Street
Inverness, FL 34450

Re: Proposed Bill to Exempt Licensed Professionals from Local Fertilizer Ordinances

Dear Honorable Charles Dean:

We respectfully request that you withdraw your fertilizer bill that would exempt licensed professionals from local fertilizer ordinances. This bill would infringe on The City of Sanibel's right to Home Rule and would eliminate critical tools needed by local governments to address water quality problems and comply with state-mandated programs such as the Total Maximum Daily Load Program (TMDL) and Numeric Nutrient Criteria. Licensed professional fertilizer applicators make up a large majority of the fertilizer applicators on Sanibel. Your legislation would effectively limit our ability to address nutrient source control and render our ordinance completely ineffective.

Between 2003 and 2007, Sanibel experienced extensive algae blooms that occurred throughout the coastal waters of Lee County. These blooms blanketed area beaches and resulted in huge impacts to our local tourism-based economy. In 2008, the City of Sanibel and Lee County funded a \$768,000 study conducted by researchers from Florida Gulf Coast University, the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, Nova Southeastern University National Coral Reef Institute, University of New Hampshire Jackson Estuarine Laboratory, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to investigate the conditions that caused the algae blooms. **Results of this scientific study clearly indicate that increased nitrogen loading from stormwater runoff, including fertilizer, contributed to the extensive algae blooms in our coastal waters.** Furthermore, they recommended implementing Best Management Practices, including fertilizer ordinances, as one way to address nutrient sources. A copy of the Final Report and Recommendations is included with this letter.

Like many other coastal communities in Florida, Sanibel's economy is highly dependent upon good water quality. We know from past experience that tourists will not visit Sanibel if our beaches are covered with algae. We request you do not impede on our cities right to Home Rule.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ruane
Mayor, City of Sanibel