Message

From: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)
Sent: 10/28/2020 11:58:21 PM
To: 404Assumption-FL [404Assumption-FL@epa.gov]
Subject: Public Comment: Deny assumption of Section 404 authority

Dear Mr. Kelly Laycock,

I am writing to request that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency deny the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (Department) request to take over wetlands permitting from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I am concerned that delegating authority under section 404 of the Clean Water Act to the State of Florida will result in fast-tracking permits for developers and powerful special interests.

Florida's wetlands are vital to our environment and economy. They store and clean freshwater, replenish our drinking water supply, and bolster our resilience against climate change, flooding, and storms. The Department's request to assume 404 permitting authority would add additional regulatory burden to an agency that is already under-resourced and failing to meet its current responsibilities. For example, the Department is sorely behind on the development of protections for impaired waterbodies across the state. Research has also shown that the Department's current strategies for addressing stormwater and agriculture runoff are not meeting their intended pollution reduction goals.

The Department's request for assumption of Section 404 authority should be denied. Undertaking this expansive responsibility is not feasible for the State of Florida at this time. I urge you to deny the Department's request and maintain the federal protections and resources that Florida's wetlands and wildlife depend on. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)