

Ocean Conservancy • 1000 Friends of Florida • Florida Wildlife Federation • Sea Turtle Conservancy • Surfrider Foundation • Key West Committee for Safer Cleaner Ships • Lower Keys Guides Association • Waterkeepers Florida • Dade Heritage Trust • Dream In Green • Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life • The CLEO Institute • Friends of the Everglades • National Parks Conservation Association • Collier County Waterkeeper • VolunteerCleanup.Org • Healthy Gulf • Florida Conservation Voters • Suncoast Waterkeeper • Miami Waterkeeper • Tampa Bay Waterkeeper • Shark Team One • Tropical Audubon Society

April 27, 2021

Executive Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
400 S Monroe St
Tallahassee, FL 32399 Governor Ron DeSantis

RE: Veto Request of HB 267 / SB 426 State Preemption of Seaport Regulation

Dear Governor DeSantis,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we respectfully request that you **veto HB 267/SB 426, State Preemption of Seaport Regulation**. The legislation presents a potential loss for the economically significant and ecologically iconic Florida Coral Reef Tract, among other Floridian ecosystems, and it potentially kneecaps future substantive efforts that could be used to combat against climate change. **In previous sessions you have rightfully taken a stand for home rule and have exercised your veto power in order to uphold the authority of local governments to work for their citizens and constituents. This situation is no different, and we encourage you to veto this legislation.**

Florida's ocean and coastal assets are a key economic driver for the state, as well as the foundation of the state's cultural identity. Floridians live, work, and play on the state's beaches and the reefs offshore, and visitors leave behind billions in contributions to the state's GDP. Port authorities and local governments know their local waterways best. These waterways are the community backyard – they are where citizens make a living and where they play.

Overriding the home rule powers of local governments will be counterproductive when it comes to achieving restoration and protection of the unique environment that Floridians and visitors alike overwhelmingly prioritize. Local governments and port authorities should be allowed to retain the power to regulate vessels that might have deleterious impact on local ecosystems, for example on coral reef habitat or hardbottom fish habitat – those very ecosystems that are the driver of billions of dollars in impacts to Florida's economy.

Furthermore, the existing legislation is written so broadly that it would preclude local governments and port authorities from bringing forth regulations that would restrict emissions from the shipping and cruise line industries in their home waterways. Shipping emissions, if left unchecked, will account for nearly 17% of total greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. As it stands right now, if shipping emissions were treated as a greenhouse gas emitting country, they would be the 6th largest polluter on the planet. Furthermore, shipping emissions have significant impacts on the health of local residents, and can harm nearby wildlife and pollute local wild habitats.

Allowing local governments to tailor regulations that can reduce shipping emissions, for example through regulating the size and amount of traffic in ports, is critically necessary in the global fight against carbon pollution, and is of paramount importance in a state like Florida that is facing down the effects of climate change on a near daily basis.

Sincerely,



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