



Dear Friends,

This was supposed to be the year of water - it wasn't.

It gives us no joy to send out this joint statement calling for a No Vote on Senate Bill 918. Each of the organizations signed onto this alert has worked for more than a year and a half with Sens. Dean, Simmons, Montford, Hays, and Simpson to draft legislation that will protect Florida's springs.

Despite Sen. Dean's best efforts and intentions, lobbyists for regulated industries and agriculture have managed to turn SB 918, the Senate water bill, from a bill that protects Florida's springs to one that threatens all Florida waterbodies. **SB 918 will be on the Senate floor tomorrow, Wednesday, April 29.** Please phone the Senators for your County and **urge them to vote NO on SB 918 or any bill that is taken up in its place.**

1. Please **phone the Senators from your county** -- [a list of all Senators](#) including the areas they represent or [find your Senator](#).
2. Please **email all Senators** -- [copy and paste this list](#) into your email.

### Why Vote No?

Last year, during a Committee meeting on proposed springs legislation, Senate President Andy Gardiner told industry lobbyists, "You're not going to study us to death on this one and you're not going to run out the clock... Members come and go, but good policy stays, and I believe this is something we will be able to be proud of." Unfortunately, Senate Bill 918 fails to meet President Gardiner's call.

The House started the water debate by passing a 94-page bill on the third day of session with only one committee hearing at which DEP said it hadn't even finished reviewing the bill. It was full of gifts for agriculture and industry, but almost empty on good policy to protect our waters.

The Senate took up the House's bad policy language while, at the same time, weakening the good springs protections measures found in earlier drafts of SB 918. The bill headed to the Floor on Wednesday will not protect our waters:

[Lake Okeechobee/Everglades/Estuaries](#) – SB 918 abandons the existing water quality permitting program which regulates pollutants entering and discharging from Lake Okeechobee. These pollutants affect the health of Lake Okeechobee and contribute to the terrible algae blooms on Florida's east and west coasts, like the [algae bloom spotted this weekend](#) heading from the Lake to the St. Lucie Estuary.

[State Water Policy](#) – SB 918 continues to rely on ineffective stakeholder-driven Basin Management Action Plans and Best Management Practices to improve water quality and adopts state water supply policy founded on the fantasy that no matter how many people come to the state, there will always be a way to provide them with whatever water they desire. Most troubling, to accomplish this goal the legislature plans to spend taxpayer money on private water supply projects for large agricultural corporations and utilities and to tie the hands of water management districts if they try to limit water withdrawals and protect our waters.

Springs – Springs legislation proposed at the beginning of the 2014 legislative session was championed by environmental groups because of its strengthened environmental standards, ambitious deadlines, new regulatory prohibitions, and significant funding. Unfortunately, a year and a half later, most of these protections have been stripped away. The current bill would do very little to accelerate the restoration of Florida’s iconic, but highly degraded, springs.

Water Conservation – SB 918 prioritizes unsustainable surface water withdrawals over sustainable water conservation. If we as a state do not live within our water means, any environmental gains from springs protection will be lost.

This is not a case of the perfect being the enemy of the good, but of a good bill ruined by the influence of special interests and the very state agencies should be protecting our environment. The good news is that Senate President Gardiner and Sen. Dean have another year. Florida can do the right thing for our water in the 2016 session.

[Call or write your Senator today](#) and tell them that SB 918 will not protect or restore our springs, that it endangers Lake Okeechobee, the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries and the Everglades, and that it moves state water policy in the wrong direction. **Urge Senators to VOTE NO on SB 918.**

To email all Senators, copy and paste this into your email:

abruzzo.joseph.web@flsenate.gov, altman.thad.web@flsenate.gov, bean.aaron.web@flsenate.gov, benacquisto.lizbeth.web@flsenate.gov, bradley.rob.web@flsenate.gov, brandes.jeff.web@flsenate.gov, braynon.oscar.web@flsenate.gov, bullard.dwight.web@flsenate.gov, clemens.jeff.web@flsenate.gov, dean.charles.web@flsenate.gov, detert.nancy.web@flsenate.gov, portilla.miguel.web@flsenate.gov, evers.greg.web@flsenate.gov, flores.anitere.web@flsenate.gov, gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov, galvano.bill.web@flsenate.gov, garcia.rene.web@flsenate.gov, gardiner.andy.web@flsenate.gov, gibson.audrey.web@flsenate.gov, grimsley.denise.web@flsenate.gov, hays.alan.web@flsenate.gov, hukill.dorothy.web@flsenate.gov, joyner.arthenia.web@flsenate.gov, latvala.jack.web@flsenate.gov, lee.tom.web@flsenate.gov, legg.john.web@flsenate.gov, margolis.gwen.web@flsenate.gov, montford.bill.web@flsenate.gov, negron.joe.web@flsenate.gov, richter.garrett.web@flsenate.gov, ring.jeremy.web@flsenate.gov, sachs.maria.web@flsenate.gov, simmons.david.web@flsenate.gov, simpson.wilton.web@flsenate.gov, smith.chris.web@flsenate.gov, sobel.eleanor.web@flsenate.gov, soto.darren.web@flsenate.gov, stargel.kelli.web@flsenate.gov, thompson.geraldine.web@flsenate.gov, hutson.travis.web@flsenate.gov