

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**Environmentalists, civic groups and businesses appeal to Florida Legislature
for real waterway protection**

Today, at simultaneous press conferences, clean water activists delivered a letter signed by 106 organizations and businesses to Florida Senate President Andy Gardiner and House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, calling for real protection of the state's imperiled waterways. The letter urges them, along with other Florida legislators, to amend the 2016 water bills, SB 552 and HB 7005. The bills, undermined by loopholes, rely primarily on tools that have failed to clean up Florida's waters for decades.

"These draft bills do not go far enough to address the issues of water supply and water quality," said Dr. Katie Tripp, Director of Science and Conservation for Save the Manatee Club. "In their current forms, these bills will not protect the citizens of Florida or our natural resources."

The letter suggests eleven key areas of concern, which can be remedied by amendments. "They are not done yet," said Maria Bolton-Joubert, Central Florida Sierra Club, at the event in Orlando. "The legislature needs to roll up its sleeves and get to work fixing the problems in these bills." The Orlando crowd delivered a poster-sized copy of the letter, with all 106 signatures, to the senator's aide and asked that Senate President Gardiner not only consider the list of concerns but also act to remedy them.

In addition to the office visits, dozens of activists gathered in front of Glen Springs in Gainesville. "With the largest number of freshwater springs in the world, Florida is 'Springs Heartland of Planet Earth'," said Lucinda Merritt of the Ichetucknee Alliance. "Instead of allowing these world-class water treasures to become increasingly polluted—which has been happening for a number of years—we need effective actions to clean them up."

"Pass comprehensive water quality and quantity bills that concentrate on cleaning up pollution at the sources and conserving Florida's aquifer with no net additional withdrawals," said Marty Sullivan, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee of the League of Women Voters of Orange County.

Signatories to the letter delivered today are calling for legislation that ensures conservation; long-term protection of Florida's springs, rivers, estuaries and aquifers; and rapid restoration of imperiled waterways, because clean, plentiful water is the linchpin for Florida's public, environmental, and economic health.

Complete letter with 106 signatories listed:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Byjb07VUzvnvMX0dCdm1WY0RZMGs/view?usp=sharing>

Photos of today's events:

<http://wewantcleanwater.com/december-press-conferences/>

Short-form letter for publishing:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Byjb07VUzvnvMcjF0NzNna0l6YzA/view?usp=sharing>

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