

**WE NEED YOUR HELP! PLEASE FLOOD OUR
LEGISLATORS WITH LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS IN
SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 851 AND SENATE BILL 658!
IF THIS ISSUE IS NOT TAKEN CARE OF IT WILL MEAN A
HUGE INCREASE IN THE COST OF SEPTIC PUMPING!**

**LEGISLATIVE BAN ON THE LAND APPLICATION OF SEPTAGE:
WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW**

WRITING EFFECTIVE LETTERS TO A LEGISLATOR:

- Address letters to members of the Legislature as follows:

The Honorable (Legislator's Name)
State Senator, District #
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

- Use the right address and spell your legislator's name correctly. Type or print legibly. Sign your name neatly and give your address correctly so the legislator can respond to your letter.
- Keep letters, email, and faxes as brief as possible. Concisely written correspondence is more likely to grab and keep the reader's attention.
- Identify your issue or opinion at the beginning of the letter; don't bury your main point.
- Cover only one issue per letter. If you have another issue to address, write another letter.
- Back up your opinions with supporting facts. Your letter should inform the reader, and facts make an argument more tangible and convincing.
- Avoid abbreviations or acronyms, and don't use technical jargon.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE:

THE SCOPE AND ITS IMPACT

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) estimates that there are 2.75 million septic systems in Florida. 40% of those pumped are disposed of at sites like ours.

**AS OF RIGHT NOW, JULY 1, 2016 (THIS YEAR!) OUR SITES WILL BE SHUT DOWN.
WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP THIS FROM HAPPENING.**

If we can't stop the ban on land application of septage, the impacts to our customers, our industry and the environment will be horrific. The only alternative for many of us will be to haul the waste long distances to municipal sewer treatment plants and pay 3-4 times more to dispose of it than what it currently costs us. This means the cost to our customers will go up—more than likely 2-3 times what it is now. What will you do when you call and we have to tell you a septic pumpout is now \$600, not \$275 like it used to be?

The majority of our customers simply cannot afford such an expensive pumpout. Many of customers struggle to pay what it currently costs. We cannot afford to absorb the increased disposal costs—we would lose money on each and every pumpout if we did that.

And did you know that most sewer treatment plants will not accept septage? There are many reasons for this. For starters, most sewer treatment plants are not designed to take septage and treat it properly in their waste stream. Most municipal sewer treatment plans are at capacity because of the growth in population Florida

has experienced in the last few decades and thus simply cannot take septic waste in addition to what they already have to deal with.

Then there's the issue of the waste that comes from grease traps and portable toilets. All restaurants, regardless of whether they are connected to city sewer or a septic system, have a tank that functions to collect grease and keep it from getting out to sewer pipes or a drainfield. Most restaurants are **REQUIRED** to have these grease traps pumped monthly. All construction sites and most special events are **REQUIRED** to have portable toilets. However, most municipal sewer treatment plants will **NOT** allow disposal of waste from grease traps or portable toilets. So what is going to happen with this waste?

There is no doubt that this ban on land application of septage could easily lead to the collapse of our industry because the average person simply cannot afford the increased cost and will therefore not get their septic tank pumped by a septic contractor when they need it. If the truck is not rolling, we cannot pay the bills and this has a very good potential to put all of us out of business. That then leads to loss of jobs and an increased number of Floridians in the unemployment line.

There is also no doubt that this scenario will impact our environment. Sewage from septic tanks with failing drainfields will end up on the ground surface and it won't be uncommon for there to be illegal pumping of septic tanks out on the ground surface. Legally, in order for a permit to be released to replace an existing drainfield, it is required that the septic tank be pumped and certified by a Licensed Florida Septic Contractor. So where does that leave the ability to install drainfields legally? Is all of this really what our legislature wants?

**THERE IS VERY LITTLE TIME LEFT IN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION
AND LOTS TO DO TO GET THIS ISSUE TAKEN CARE OF.
PLEASE WRITE TO THE SENATORS NOW TO HELP WITH THIS ISSUE!!**

LAND APPLICATION OF SEPTAGE

We commonly get the question "What do you do with this stuff when you leave here with it?" Well here's a synopsis of what we do. We call it Land Application of Septage. First of all, all land application sites in the state of Florida must be permitted and inspected by the Florida Department of Health, Environmental Health on a regular basis. Florida Septic Code has an entire section written to regulate the methods we use to treat and dispose of every bit of septage. We start by screening the trash out of the septage, then treat in a treatment tank it with lime which raises the pH to 14 and kills the pathogens that might be in it. Then, once it has been treated for the appropriate amount of time and in the appropriate way, we pump it out of the treatment tank and spread it on a hay field, in much the same way commercial fertilizer would be spread. It should be noted that most land application sites are not spreading on the same spot more than twice per year. The volume of waste being treated is not that great versus the area of land accepting it. To monitor and ensure that we are not overloading the land with nutrients, by code we must do soil sampling at least once per year.

Next comes the part where we harvest the hay. By code, we must wait at least 30 days from when we spread on a piece of dirt before we can harvest hay from it. That is so the waste has time to go down thru the soil and not be present on the top of the ground. We harvest hay that can be safely and resourcefully fed to livestock or used for many other purposes. And we do it with natural fertilizer. But the biggest reason that cutting and hauling this hay away is important for our land is that this is nutrient uptake. There has been concern voiced in legislative hearings that we overload the land with nitrogen thru landspread of septage. However, it has been found that cutting and removing the hay takes care of removing these nutrients and the levels of nutrients in our soil upon sampling does not increase.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is currently conducting a scientific study of sites like ours and we are participating. Due to legislative concern over whether we are impacting water quality due to land application of septage, DEP installed four monitoring wells at our site (as well as many others around the state) and has been sampling those wells on a monthly basis. At the end of 12 months of sampling, DEP plans to compile and analyze the data. If the July 1, 2016 ban is not at least delayed this study will be in vain and we

will be shut down and all the ramifications mentioned above will potentially come true, all without at least completing this study or any proof that land application of septage is causing a problem.

We have a bill filed in the House of Representatives (HB 851) and in the Senate (SB 658) that would repeal or at least delay the implementation of this ban on land application of septage. House Bill 851 has already been heard and approved by its committees. Senate Bill 658 has gone nowhere. We need your help to make our legislators understand the importance of passing this bill. This legislative session is over March 11th of this year. In that short time we still need the Senate Bill 658 to be heard in three committees and go on the senate floor to be voted on. That means there is a LOT to do and very LITTLE time to do it in. We need your help! We need to flood these legislators with letters and phone calls from you asking them to get this passed! Please speak up!

This is our water too!!!

People, when discussing this issue, often forget this is our water too! We are educated and responsible contractors and Floridians—we don't want to do anything harmful to our land or our environment. So we take all of this seriously. We drink this water, we raise our families with this water, we play in this water. We care about it too!

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SENATORS TO CONTACT IMMEDIATELY:

The Honorable Charlie Dean

311 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5005
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/s5>

The Honorable Travis Hutson

312 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5006
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S6>

The Honorable Wilton Simpson

322 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5018
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S18>

The Honorable David Simmons

400 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5010
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S10>

The Honorable Thad Altman

314 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5016
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S16>

The Honorable Christopher L. Smith

202 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5031
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S31>

The Honorable Greg Evers

308 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5002
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S2>

The Honorable Darren Soto

220 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5014
Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S14>

The Honorable Alan Hays

320 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Phone: (850) 487-5011

Email: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S11>