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## **DEP AND EPA CRAFT SOLUTION FOR SAFER, CLEANER WATER FOR FLORIDA**

**~ Florida's numeric nutrient criteria will cover the vast majority of Florida waterbodies ~**

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reached an agreement to continue the protection of Florida’s waterways from excess nitrogen and phosphorus pollution. These pollutants cause algal blooms and are among the largest contributors to water quality problems in Florida. This agreement marks a significant step forward in protecting and restoring water quality across the state.

The agreement builds off of momentum from November, when EPA approved the state's numeric nutrient criteria to cover all lakes, rivers, streams and springs, as well as estuaries from Clearwater Harbor to Biscayne Bay. The Department will move forward with rulemaking and legislation in 2013 to finish the job of setting numeric nutrient criteria for Florida's waterways.

"As a result of continued cooperation, the Department and EPA have developed a joint commitment to clean up Florida’s waterways," said DEP Secretary Herschel T. Vinyard Jr. "We can now move forward to implementing nutrient reduction criteria, rather than delaying environmental improvements due to endless litigation. We all should recognize the dedication of EPA and Department scientists to protecting our waterways. We appreciate their commitment to a sound, long term plan to protect Florida waters."

The plan includes proposing state legislation and adopting additional state rules that, when combined, will eliminate the need for continued dual rulemaking and secure the foundation for a singular, state-led solution for the state of Florida. Currently, state and federal rules are in place for some Florida waterbodies.

The proposed legislation would require the Department to complete its nutrient criteria rulemaking for remaining coastal and estuarine waters by Dec. 1, 2014, and establish interim nutrient standards until then. The legislation would further codify requirements for nutrient conditions in all managed conveyances and canals, and makes it clear that all state criteria will go into effect when EPA removes the federal criteria and ceases future rulemaking.

"Clean water is vital to Florida’s future. The health and growth of Florida’s economy, and the jobs that go with it, depend on high quality and sustainable sources of water," said Sen. Charlie Dean. "We expect this legislation to be part a strong, effective framework for protecting and restoring waters which are vital to the

economic and environmental health of Florida. Secretary Vinyard’s leadership is instrumental in getting the water right.”

“There is not a bigger challenge or more important issue to address than nutrients, if we are to restore and protect the health of our rivers, lakes, springs and estuaries,” said Rep. Matt Caldwell. “Measurable nutrient criteria will result in cleaner, safer water for all Floridians.”

In addition, the Department has adopted a clear implementation plan for the criteria so application of the new rules can occur immediately. This agreement, once implemented and completed, will be coupled with EPA’s prior approval in November of the Department’s adopted water quality standards. The result will be Florida having numeric nutrient standards for lakes, streams springs, estuaries and coastal waters, and all but nearly 1 percent of these waterways in the state.

Supplemental Information:

[NNC Agreement](#)

[Path Forward Document](#)

[Implementation Plan](#)

[Proposed Legislation](#)

[Florida Numeric Nutrient Criteria Coverage Map](#)

[Numeric Nutrient Criteria State-by-State](#)

#### **About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state’s principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida’s environment and natural resources. The Department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida’s air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the Department’s website log on to [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us).