

Name	Message
John Grawe	I am faculty coordinator to PBAU's marine biology club and the university requires 45 hrs of community service. I would like the biologist work in their future field. Can you give me an idea of the nature of the work you have available for them. They do do beach cleanups but I'd sooner see them do ocean research
John Grawe	I am a faculty coordinator to Palm Beach Atlantic University's marine biology club. All PBA students are required to commit to 45 hrs of community service. Could you inform me as to how these biologist could assist your organization to help the program and satisfy their obligation to the University. I'd like to see ocean field work over beach clean up but helping the mangroves is OK. Looking forward to working w/ you
Representative Frank Artiles	<p>As Chairmen of the Florida Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus (Caucus), one of the challenges that we most often hear about from Florida sportsmen and women is in regards to access. Recent management decisions from the federal government in Biscayne Bay, and other marine areas, are troubling and have produced undue closures for recreational anglers. Given that, it is disconcerting that the Our Florida Reefs group is pursuing additional closures under the guise of coral reef health. While we fully support and understand the need to balance resource management priorities and recreational pursuits, we believe that the approach and process followed by Our Florida Reefs has been flawed and that the concerns from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) should be heeded.</p> <p>While admirable on its face, many of the proposals from the innocuously named Our Florida Reefs are nothing more than an answer in search of a problem; there is no scientific basis for the push to have the area designated as a national marine sanctuary and the potential for Marine Protected Areas, which seek to create no-fishing zones and would negatively impact Florida's anglers as well as angling and boating access. Additionally, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, the agency with the scientific expertise and jurisdictional authority to manage the fisheries, is on record from a September 16, 2014 letter specifically opposing restricting public access in this area:</p> <p>"...the threats of climate change, water quality, and physical disturbances severely outweigh the threat of fishing in Florida where fisheries management is strong. In addition, scientific evidence suggests that no-fishing zones have not benefited coral reefs in the Florida Keys and that the vast majority of coral loss in Florida has been due to bleaching, disease, sedimentation, physical damage, and other human-induced environmental factors."</p> <p>Lastly, many of the proposed measures would have significant ramifications on the FWC, from enforcement burdens, to unfounded fishery management measures, to reduced funding through license purchase discounts. Annually, over 3 million anglers in Florida account for more than \$8.6 billion in economic activity, support more than 80,000 jobs, and the majority of which purchase licenses and fishing tackle that significantly help to fund the FWC and their management objectives that benefit the general public and our coastal resources.</p> <p>We fully support the FWC, their scientific management approach, and their prudence in carefully addressing broader conservation priorities in South Florida. As such, the disregard for their guidance relative to no-take areas is a significant cause for concern. Until such time as the FWC and the Our Florida Reefs coalition can reach an agreement on management options that are scientifically justified and accomplish defined goals, we cannot support the Southeast Florida Coral Reefs Initiative.</p> <p>Representative Frank Artiles Senator Thad Altman House Caucus Chairman Senate Caucus Chairman</p>
Pete Snyder	<p>The Golf and Green Industry Associations that are listed at the end of this letter want to congratulate you and all the members of the Southeast Florida Coastal Ocean Task Force (COTF) for the excellent work that you have undertaken to enhance the health of our coastal waters and restore the vigor of our reefs. The Final Recommendations Report that you prepared is comprehensive and includes many worthwhile recommendations.</p> <p>The hard-working people of the Golf and Green Industries are active stakeholders in the effort to improve the environmental health of Florida with particular attention paid to its precious waters. Each association listed below has a Best Management Practice (BMP), adopted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) or by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), by which we are rigorously guided as stewards of Florida's valuable resources. We live and recreate here and want our children and grandchildren to enjoy Florida's natural beauty for years to come. This is our legacy.</p> <p>We rely heavily on peer-reviewed science from FDEP, from FDACS, and the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS). In this regard, some of the recommendations made in the Yards, Gardens and Golf Course section of the COTF report are inconsistent with that science and would not stand up under sound scientific scrutiny.</p> <p>Of concern are such topics as: nutrients and run-off/leaching, the use of glyphosate and other pesticides, and the attributes of Paspalum versus other turfgrass varieties, among other statements in the report.</p> <p>In some cases, the COTF Report makes recommendations that are duplicative of programs already in existence. As an example, golf courses have a Best Management Program that was developed jointly by FDEP, UF/IFAS and the U.S. Golf Association Green Section.</p> <p>We would like to be involved in this process. The listed associations have an estimated annual economic impact of \$23.32-billion on the State of Florida. In addition, we account for approximately 496,200 jobs in the state.</p>

	<p>We represent agronomists, soil and water scientists, entomologists, biologists and chemists who would be glad to help you gain an understanding of the research and science that is behind our practices. We can also direct you to independent, knowledgeable scientists at FDEP, FDACS and UF/IFAS.</p> <p>We agree with the COTF's recommendation that public education is needed. To this end Green Industry, through the Environmental Research & Education Foundation (EREF), has developed the "Living Green" campaign, which task force members could use. For more information, see www.ereflorida.com.</p> <p>In conclusion, the associations that have signed this letter are in agreement with the approach that COTF has taken "to develop a holistic management plan for the southeast Florida coastal waters" for the improvement of coastal waters and reefs. We are requesting that peer-reviewed science be the underpinning of any such recommendations. Again, please include us as a stakeholder in this process.</p> <p>Sincerely, Certified Pest Control Operators of Florida Environmental Research & Education Foundation of Florida Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association Florida Landscape Management Association Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association Florida Pest Management Association Florida Turfgrass Association South Florida Professional Golfers' Association Sports Turf Managers Association, Florida Chapters Turf Producers of Florida</p>
Jennifer Bryan	<p>Florida Golf Course Superintendents are proud stewards of our environment in Florida. The Florida GCSA proudly supports the profession, the Association and our "Green Club" certification program for golf courses; called the Golf Course Best Management Practices (BMP) Certification Program.</p> <p>Our industry takes proactive measures to demonstrate our responsibility to the environment. In 2012, we implemented a voluntary Golf Best Management Practices (BMP) Certification Program that we developed in cooperation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, United States Golf Association Green Section, and the University of Florida. The goal was to agree on attainable management practices to keep golf a profitable business in Florida while protecting state water and natural resources, according to the Clean Water Act and other state and local ordinances. Participants receive training using the "Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Course" handbook which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Concepts • Environmental Monitoring • Design and Construction • Irrigation • Nutrition and Fertilization • Cultural Practices • Lake and Aquatic Plant Management • Turfgrass Pest Management • Pesticide Management • Maintenance Operations <p>Participants must also pass a comprehensive exam to earn the Certification.</p> <p>Our program has been recognized across the country and continues to be the model for other BMP Programs. Through these efforts, the Florida GCSA was recently recognized by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America with the 2015 Excellence in Government Relations Award. The Florida GCSA believes that Florida superintendents are truly environmental stewards and by providing a certified program, we will continue to demonstrate our positive respect and impact on the environment.</p> <p>In addition to our program, the Green Industry-BMP (Gi-BMP) is a science based educational program for all green industry workers (lawn Care and landscape maintenance professionals), operated by the University of Florida/IFAS Florida Friendly Landscaping Program. The Gi-BMPs teach environmentally safe landscaping practices that help conserve and protect Florida's ground and surface waters. All commercial fertilizer</p>

	<p>applicators must have this certification as well as a Limited Commercial Fertilizer Applicator Certificate (LCFAC) that is issued by FDACS. The industry supports efforts to insure compliance. Many non-commercial industry applicators are required to pass training by local ordinances or voluntarily participate in the program to better serve their clients.</p> <p>Both of these programs are already in place and would eliminate the need for a “Green Club” certification as indicated in your final recommendation report.</p> <p>And finally, I urge you to solicit peer-reviewed science related to such topics as nutrients and runoff/leaching, the use of glyphosate, and attributes of Paspalum versus other varieties as referenced in your report. For example, although Paspalum has many positive benefits given the right set of conditions, it’s not the universal solution for many, if not most lawn and golf course applications, as section 7.Vii would have you believe. It is more important to have the right plant in the right place. I would encourage you to reach out to the turf and research scientists of University of Florida/IFAS for more information. They have been instrumental in working alongside our Association making sure that we are using the best scientifically proven methods to maintain golf courses across the state while protecting Florida’s environmental quality and communities.</p> <p>As you can see, our industry is already taking the appropriate actions and because of this I do not support, nor find necessary, Recommendations N-68 and N-94.</p> <p>Respectfully, Jennifer Bryan</p>
Rick Alvarez	<p>Comment on RMA N-59 Ban the practice of spear fishing on SCUBA to enable sustainable use of our Florida reef.</p> <p>I certainly oppose the RMA N-59. As a second generation Floridian, most which has been enjoying the Florida waters and fisheries , this propose ban is another way wherein Government is encroaching into our private enjoyment of our natural resources.</p> <p>As a staunch conservationist and a supporter of current fishing regulation which applies to spearfishing. I do not see any evidence that would support this ban. As a matter of practice most spear fishing enthusiast are most selective as to what the take from our waters.</p> <p>Please note the record as to this proposed Ban</p>