

# Treasure Coast TriCounty Legislative Priorities

## ADDENDUM: Revised Biosolids Policy Statement

(changes are highlighted)

### **Biosolids**

Today, Florida's central sewer wastewater treatment facilities produce approximately 340,000 tons of biosolids which are the human waste effluents from central sewer wastewater treatment facilities. Approximately 100,000 dry tons of biosolids are designated as Class B biosolids which are treated sewage sludge that meets U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for land application as fertilizer and are allowed to have detectable levels of pathogens. Another 100,000 dry tons of biosolids are deposited in various landfills throughout the state. The final 140,000 dry tons of biosolids are further processed, dried, and composted with material from the landscape industry to produce approximately 200,000 tons of Class AA biosolids. These biosolids can then be distributed and marketed as fertilizer. This class of biosolids is unregulated and land applied mainly on pasture lands, and to a lesser extent on citrus.

Both Class B biosolids and Class AA biosolid fertilizers contain approximately 5.5% Total Nitrogen (TN) and 2.2% Total Phosphorus (TP). Therefore, the 300,000 dry tons of land applied Class AA and Class B biosolids contribute over 33 million pounds of TN and 13.2 million pounds of TP to agricultural lands each year. While the practice of land-applying Class B biosolids was recently banned in the Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee, St. Lucie River and Everglades watersheds, the St. Johns River Upper Basin in 2016 received nearly 74,000 tons of Class B biosolids in its watershed.

One of the by-products or residuals of the wastewater treatment process is called biosolids, or the wet sludge that is left behind after the initial processing. In Florida, biosolids are either land applied as a soil amendment to improve agricultural productivity or disposed of in landfills. Either way it is an important source of water, energy, nitrogen, and phosphorus resources that some suggest could be recovered and used more efficiently. There is also a concern statewide that excess nutrients from land application of human waste biosolids could reach surface waters because of rainfall runoff and continue to increase the occurrence of chronic harmful algal blooms.

Support the efforts of the state and local governments to prioritize the reduction and eventual elimination of the land application, and most importantly the composting of Class B and AA biosolids.

This includes efforts to immediately establish standard protocols and funding for the identification, quarterly tracking and monitoring of non-residential biosolid and class AA application and explore new wastewater treatment technologies to improve biosolids resource, recovery and management options.