



General Concerns and Comments

- Indian River County understands that biosolids are a byproduct that must be disposed of. We are asking for a good common sense framework for applying biosolids in a manner that protects our precious waterways.
- State agencies, such as FDEP need to re-evaluate the way that point source and non-point source nutrient loads are regulated. Somewhere between 1%-3% of total nutrient loading in our waterways is attributed to point-source locations, which are highly regulated.
- Biosolids come from wastewater treatment facilities, which are highly regulated point source locations. When this byproduct is hauled away and land applied, it suddenly is treated as a non-point source with little oversight. It seems that we need to look at the other ~97% of nutrient loading a little closer if we are going to solve our water quality problem. We think that biosolids is a good place to start.
- It costs far more to remove nutrients from water bodies than to prevent them from reaching them in the first place.
- The County has already spent tens of millions of dollars, with assistance from the State and other agencies to reduce nutrient loading in the Indian River Lagoon. All of this work can easily be undone with continued application of biosolids without proper protections in place.
- For illustrative purposes, one permitted biosolids site in our County applied more phosphorous (293,358 pounds) in 2017 than is produced by all 30,000 septic tanks in Indian River County (150,000 pounds – estimated). At an estimated cost of \$20,000 per sewer conversion, it would cost \$600 million to replace these septic tanks and remove less phosphorous than was applied at one location (the site was permitted for 519,498 pounds).
- Other stakeholders will claim that these rules will cost them too much. The fact is, those responsible for pollution should be responsible for cleanup. As illustrated above, the cost to clean up the nutrients is far greater than any possible cost of compliance with rules to ensure that the nutrients don't reach the waterways in the first place.
- Water quality testing is needed to monitor whether nutrients are leaching into surface waters and ground water. The proposed threshold of 100 pounds of available nitrogen per acre is inadequate. Water quality monitoring should be required for all sites where biosolids are applied.
- 3 years is too long to implement changes. Far too much damage can be done during this period.
- FDEP needs to place a moratorium on new permits until the rule is in place. There is a new application (Poteat Ranch) on the Brevard/Indian River County line. Applicants like this should not be allowed to "beat the clock" on the new regulations. They know what they are getting into with the rulemaking underway. If new permits are issued, they should have conditions requiring compliance sooner than the 3-year timeframe.
- Currently, biosolids are not land applied south of Indian River County along the eastern portion of Florida due to restrictions currently in Florida Statutes. We are only asking that the biosolids coming from communities south of us (e.g. Broward County) are only spread in our county if it can be done in a way that does not foul our waterways. Short of that, we should have the same protections in Florida Statutes currently provided for communities to our south.
- Water Quality testing (surface or groundwater) should be incorporated into any proposed rule change.