



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John Peyton, Mayor

August 6, 2008

The Honorable Charlie Crist
Office of the Governor
Florida State Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Governor Crist,

I write today to convey my concerns regarding the future health of one of our state's great natural treasures, the St. Johns River. I am particularly troubled by Georgia-Pacific's current plan to build a 4-mile wastewater pipeline from its Putnam County plant to the St. Johns River. I oppose the construction of the pipeline in its current form and believe that Georgia Pacific should be required to explore more updated technology options to ensure the health of our river.

When completed, the pipeline would result in the daily pumping of millions of gallons of wastewater directly into the St. Johns River – a move that is detrimental to our shared goal of protecting the health of one of Florida's greatest natural resources. The wastewater contains harmful dioxin, a by-product of the mill's bleaching processes used to clean and refine pulp, and has the proven potential to cause grave physiological damage to the aquatic life.

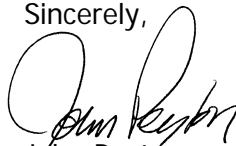
In an effort to meet federal clean water standards in Rice Creek (the tributary into which Georgia-Pacific has discharged wastewater since 1947), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), under a previous administration, approved the construction of the pipeline scheduled to be completed by September 2010.

I want to urge you and officials at FDEP to join me in taking a second look at the pipeline plan and existing permit. The permission to build a pipeline was given before Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and associated nutrient loading implications were fully studied and understood. Now that their significance and parameters are better quantified, the overall strategy for the improvement of the river needs to be re-visited. We should not make decisions for the future of our river based on science and knowledge that is nearly six years old.

While I respect the significant environmental improvements Georgia-Pacific has made as it works to restore health to Rice Creek, that restoration cannot be done at the cost of potential accumulation of dangerous pollutants in the main stem of the river. As Mayor of Jacksonville, I am committed to doing all that is within my power to ensure continued protection of the river. In that regard, it is my understanding that the FDEP will likely be issuing a notice of intent to renew Georgia Pacific's operating permit later this year. I have directed my staff to carefully review the draft permit renewal, when released, to determine if downstream municipalities are protected from any increases in pollutants. We will be researching alternatives to wastewater disposal, and if the health of our river is not assured in the permit, I intend to seek an administrative hearing on the matter.

Governor, I know we share a great love for the natural resources in our state, and I am deeply appreciative of your investments in protecting the St. Johns River over the last two years. The Georgia Pacific pipeline, as currently proposed, takes us backward, not forward, and in that regard I look forward to working with you to find a better solution.

Sincerely,



John Peyton
Mayor

cc: Michael W. Sole, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Aaron Bean, Representative District 12
Jennifer Carroll, House Representative District 13
Terry Fields, House Representative District 14
Audrey Gibson, House Representative District 15
Charles McBurney, House Representative District 16
Stan Jordan, House Representative District 17
Don Davis, House Representative District 18
Dick Kravitz, House Representative District 19
Tony Hill, Senator District 1
Stephen Wise, Senator District 5
Jim King, Senator District 8

