

***1000 Friends of Florida • The Nature Conservancy • Audubon of Florida •  
Florida Wildlife Federation • Defenders of Wildlife***

[By Facsimile and U.S. Mail]

The Honorable Charlie Crist  
Office of the Governor  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

February 20, 2007

**RE: Florida Department of Transportation Future Corridors Action Plan**

Dear Governor Crist,

In December 2006, the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) adopted a Future Corridors Action Plan describing the potential development of nine major new transportation projects within the state. It is the concerted opinion of our respective organizations that this decision occurred with haste, absent appropriate consideration for the significant environmental and growth management consequences of transportation planning.

The fundamental flaw with the Department's Action Plan is that it positions DOT in the role of driving, rather than implementing land use decisions. Prior to considering whether or not a transportation project is appropriate, we maintain that state and local governments should first agree on a sustainable vision for the affected region—a future land use and conservation strategy that defines where to develop and what to preserve. By promoting major new road projects before such a vision exists, DOT threatens to essentially supplant the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), becoming a de facto land planning agency by opening up new frontiers for growth with each new transportation corridor proposed. Reviewing a composite map of the nine proposed corridors, it is strikingly apparent that if the development patterns which typically follow major roads continue, DOT's action plan will become a blueprint for unplanned, uncontrolled growth throughout Florida.

Of equal concern is the juxtaposition with which DOT's corridor initiative sits relative to statewide conservation efforts. In order to retain the natural attributes that make Florida unique and protect the quality of life of both current and future residents, it is essential that ongoing land preservation efforts are successful and that new or additional pressure is not created to convert rural and agricultural property to other uses. We believe that any effort to advance a new transportation corridor must be integrated with *and conditioned upon* an equally robust land conservation initiative to ensure that state goals in the affected area are met. Unfortunately, DOT's Future Corridor Action Plan offers no tangible mechanism to accomplish this. In the absence of an effective conservation strategy for the future, traditional mechanisms of buying land for preservation and strategies for retaining agriculture will be overwhelmed by the speculative market generated by new road construction. At risk is the viability of nationally renowned ecosystems, water resources, listed species, traditional rural uses, and Florida's portfolio of existing public lands.

Since the adoption of DOT's action plan in December, DCA has expressed serious concerns about its impacts on the future of growth management. Similarly, reservations have grown among local governments and state elected leaders who accurately perceive the new corridor initiative as potentially competing with more pressing and legitimate transportation needs at the local level.

**FDOT Future Corridors Action Plan - February 20, 2007 (continued)**  
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In light of our concerns and those of respected state leaders, we urge you to call upon DOT to rescind its Future Corridors Action Plan. In our view, Florida's growth management agency—the Department of Community Affairs—is most appropriately equipped with the planning and intergovernmental coordination skills necessary to take the lead on this issue of statewide importance. On behalf of our respective organizations, we ask you to direct DCA, under the capable leadership of Secretary Tom Pelham, to engage stakeholders including but not limited to DOT, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, local governments, regional planning entities, agriculture interests, and members of the environmental community in a collaborative discussion. Emerging from that collaborative discussion, we would anticipate the creation of refined strategies and potential legislation affecting targeted areas of the state in order to more effectively integrate growth management, conservation, agriculture, and transportation planning at a regional scale.

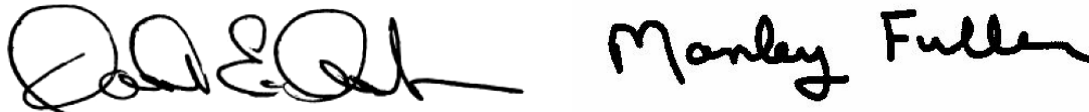
On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



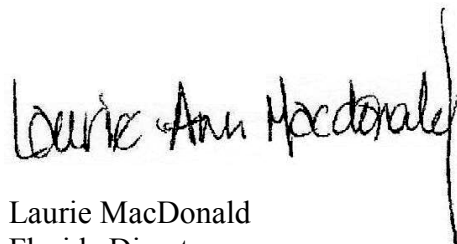
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