



Hillsborough County  
Florida

Office of the County Administrator  
Patricia G. Bean

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MEMORANDUM

**RECEIVED**

**DATE:** February 23, 2004

**TO:** Honorable Thomas Scott, Chair  
Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** *CH* Chip Hinton, Chair  
Agriculture Economic Development Council

MAR 04 2004  
PLANNING & GROWTH  
MANAGEMENT

**SUBJECT:** Wellhead and Surface Water Resource Protection

During the February 19, 2004 meeting of the Hillsborough County Agriculture Economic Development Council (AEDC), the proposed Wellhead and Surface Water Resource Protection Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Land Development Code changes were discussed.

The proposed changes involve the adoption of new a Protection Area Map and amended restricted and prohibited land uses within the zones. The proposed Protection Area Map was to be based on more recent wellfield pumping data, the addition of surface water withdrawals for public supply, and more accurate protection area computer modeling methods.

During the public input phase of drafting the ordinance, concerned citizens in the northwest part of the County expressed their opposition to the new smaller protection areas. Their main point of opposition was that property now outside of the protection area would be allowed to develop with smaller minimum lot sizes. It appeared from the onset these citizens were expressing land development concerns not scientifically defensible as a water resource protection issue. That is not to say that the concerns were not legitimate, or that those concerns shouldn't be addressed.

The result of the concerns raised by the citizens of Northwest County resulted in direction by the BOCC to redraw the Protection Area Map to include not only the new science-based protection areas but the existing protection areas as well. These much larger protection areas were then applied County-wide, not just in the Northwest. We feel this was not the best means to solve the problem raised.

The AEDC has two concerns. First, the opposition from citizens with local issues has resulted in a higher level of regulation for the whole County. Second, the action by the BOCC to include the existing (older) protection areas on the proposed Protection Area Map may not be defensible

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from a water resource protection perspective. We feel the inclusion of a land use issue independent of water resource protection has no place in an ordinance charged to provide technical guidance on water resource protection.

We are certainly sensitive to the concerns voiced by Northwest Hillsborough County residents. We feel this localized issue of minimum lot size should be addressed through the community planning process and be included in the next round of Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Land Development Code amendments. This would allow citizen concerns regarding minimum lot size to be addressed in a timely fashion through a justifiable method. We would suggest that both these Wellhead and Surface Water Protection amendments and Comprehensive Land Use Amendments to protect lot size concerns be synchronized to alleviate citizen concerns. This would address a local issue without producing unintended impacts outside the area of concern and would retain the highest recognized tenets of good planning.

In an unrelated issue, it has come to our attention that a whole new set of wells have recently been included in this set of regulations. There are now Potable Water Wellfield Protection Areas included on the Protection Area Map. Both the number and the affected lands ensnared within the protected areas are sizable. These protection areas encompass a 500 foot radius around wells defined as having at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serve at least 25 year-round residents. The Planning and Growth Management Department has indicated that there are over 700 of these dispersed throughout Hillsborough County.

The addition of 700 individual protection areas as well as the vast additional area to be regulated will make enforcement unmanageable, and would greatly expand the potential of unnecessarily impacting landowner rights with little or no resultant benefit to public supply wellhead protection. This is potentially volatile issue that has not stood the test of the Technical Advisory Committee and needs to be evaluated before the ordinance proceeds to Board action.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to comment on this process and stand ready to proactively address solutions to the concerns raised in this letter.

cc: Board of County Commissioners  
Patricia Bean, County Administrator  
Carl Harness, Assistant County Administrator  
Gene Gray, Director, Economic Development Dept.  
Stephen Gran, Manager, Agriculture Industry Development