

FCC Action Alert - Support Florida Forever - Stop Senate Bill 584

Senate Bill 584 by Senator Hays states “The State may purchase land for conservation purposes only if an equal amount of public property not being held in conservation is returned or sold at fair market value to the private sector”. This provision would also apply to counties and municipalities. The bill would end Florida Forever and curtail conservation land acquisition in Florida.

While this bill reflects Senator Hay’s view of government, more worrisome is that it conveys the view of legions of legislators who agree with him. Since he is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government that decides state environmental spending, the challenge is to persuade him to put funds in the budget for Florida Forever. An equally difficult challenge is to find allies in the legislature who will tell the leadership that land conservation is a spending priority.

Just a few years ago most legislators were friends of land conservation. Florida Forever and its successful predecessor Preservation 2000 were popular programs at home and in the Capitol. Most of those friends are long gone from Tallahassee, and their seats are now occupied by new members of the House and Senate who feel that they were elected to solve economic, not environmental problems.

So, now we must find new friends and remind former allies that conservation is important. Senators Thad Altman and Jack Latvala are champions. But other Senators, who have been friends before, need to know that we care. THAT will take serious local effort – linking need and constituencies with decision-makers.

SB 584 offers an opportunity, not just to dissuade such an ill-conceived proposal, but, to make a persuasive argument for funding Florida Forever.

We ask that you [contact](#) Senator Hays and the the members of the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee with a message in your own words or you may use [this prepared and addressed email](#)* written by the FCC.

By all means, Florida Forever, the State’s nationally acclaimed land acquisition program is crucial to Florida’s future.

It’s your voice that counts.

Thank you.

Florida Conservation Coalition