

Seminole County Legislative Delegation
Public Hearing
(9:00 am, Dec 8, 2008)

Members of the Legislative Delegation, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen . . . good morning and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak here today.

My name is Bob Beitel and I am President of the Markham Woods Association, a not-for-profit organization representing approximately 2,900 households in the 40 subdivisions along the Markham Woods Road corridor and within the existing Wekiva Study Area (WSA).

I am here today to speak to you concerning an important issue that potentially affects a significant number of homeowners in Seminole County . . . Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems in the Wekiva Study Area.

Around this time last year, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) had decided to ignore their own citizen and professional advisory group recommendations and move forward to implement new mandatory administrative rules regarding residential septic tanks. These new rules would have required all new home constructed septic systems be built using “performance-based treatment systems” costing \$20,000 to \$30,000. Current traditional septic systems cost \$5,000 to \$10,000. More important to our members, the proposed rules said that any additions or modifications to existing homes that would require increased septic tank capacity under current rules would also require the installation of the expensive new system. The DOH also wanted existing residential septic systems pumped and inspected once every five years by a licensed contractor or

plumber. And existing systems would be checked to meet several new physical parameters as well.

Fortunately, these new proposed mandatory administrative rules have been indefinitely tabled at the Governor's office. And fortunately, the Florida Legislature in April of this year passed Specific Appropriation 1682 which requires the (DOH) to do more detailed study on the question. We very much appreciate these moves and thank you for the efforts you may have made to help this issue be approached more reasonably.

Nevertheless the Markham Woods Association urges that we all continue our diligence regarding this matter. Recent legislative activity like the new discussions on protecting Florida's springsheds could unintentionally put the (DOH) and the (DEP) in a position where they feel they have a new mandate to implement the new proposed administrative rules. Also, it is important to remember that the (DOH) and the (DEP) both report through the Executive branch of our State Government. As such, only the Surgeon General and the Governor need to approve their new rules. To the extent you can continue to influence the Governor on this issue, we respectfully ask that you do so.

Our Association is in favor of a clean Wekiva River. But we are opposed to being subjected to new septic tank rules in the face of unproven claims that existing systems significantly contribute to pollution of the River. As concerned citizens, we ask for your ongoing and continued attention in this matter.

Thank you.