

January 19, 2011

The Honorable Rick Scott
Office of Governor
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001



Dear Governor Scott,

On behalf of St. Johns Riverkeeper, I am writing to express our support for the restoration of the St. Johns River and the thousands of jobs and businesses that a clean and healthy river provides. Unfortunately, the Georgia-Pacific (GP) paper mill in Palatka plans to build a pipeline that would divert millions of gallons of polluted wastewater from its current discharge in Rice Creek to the heart of the St. Johns River. The river is already suffering from excessive nutrient pollution that triggers toxic algal blooms and fish kills. The pipeline will only add additional pollutants to the river, resulting in a major setback to the ongoing efforts to restore the health of the St. Johns.

The St. Johns River is critical to our economy and quality of life in Northeast Florida. The wastewater from the proposed GP pipeline would flow north through the river's Lower Basin, an area that encompasses over 2,600 square miles and sustains over 1.3 million people. Here, a significant number of businesses and thousands of jobs related to commercial and recreational fishing, tourism, real estate, boating, and other marine-related industries depend upon a clean and healthy St. Johns.

Georgia-Pacific claims that it cannot afford to implement other available alternatives to the pipeline. However, we cannot afford to jeopardize the future health of the river and the economic wellbeing of the hundreds of thousands of people who live downstream of the mill.

We ask that you direct the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to require further testing to help answer unresolved questions regarding the toxicity of GP's wastewater and to require Georgia-Pacific to pursue other viable and cost-effective alternative technologies. By implementing alternatives to the pipeline, GP could meet water quality standards in Rice Creek, continue to provide much-needed jobs in Putnam County, and help protect the St. Johns River for all of the citizens and businesses of Northeast Florida.

Thank you for your consideration, your leadership and your support for the protection of the St. Johns River and the economy that depends upon it.

Sincerely,

Neil Armingeon
St. Johns Riverkeeper

St. Johns Riverkeeper, Inc.
2800 University Boulevard N.
Jacksonville, Florida 32211
904.256.7591
www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org