

2020 Commissioner of Agriculture & Consumer Services Report Card



The Commissioner has authority over a number of policy areas of interest to the Sierra Club. Check out the Commissioner's actions on these important issues.

- Office of Energy
- Florida Forest Service
- Other Services
- Division of Food Safety
- Division of Agricultural Environmental Services



ISSUE	WHAT HAPPENED		WHAT FLORIDA NEEDS
	GOOD	BAD	
PRE-HARVEST SUGAR FIELD BURNING GRADE: F		Failed to act to end the environmental racism at the core of the burn permit protocols. Ignored health impacts of burning on impacted communities and increased health impacts due to Covid-19. Failed to initiate phase-out of pre-harvest burning. Failed to address issue directly with impacted community members. Failed to support/encourage green harvesting. Failed to support economic growth associated with green harvesting.	27-30 mile no-burn buffer around communities as first phase of the end to pre-harvest sugar field burning. Plan for the complete elimination of pre-harvest burning. Aggressive support for green harvesting. Aggressive support for green industries and jobs based on the economic value of unburned sugar field "trash".
PLASTICS GRADE: F		No change in policy on plastics for those entities FDACS licenses despite advocacy efforts to implement change.	Ban on single use plastics and polystyrene for licensed entities.
PUBLIC HEALTH GRADE: F		Did not object to citrus growers spraying antibiotic pesticides to combat citrus greening despite sharing our serious environmental and health concerns.	Ban on antibiotic pesticides in agricultural production.

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ISSUE	WHAT HAPPENED		WHAT FLORIDA NEEDS
	GOOD	BAD	
CLEAN ENERGY GRADE: C	<p>Took leadership and created the FL Electric Vehicle Roadmap.</p> <p>Stood up the Florida Advisory Council on Climate and Energy (FACCE).</p> <p>Developed the FL Energy and Climate Plan: lays out the State's strategies to address climate change and clean, affordable energy.</p>	<p>Recommended eliminating the FL Energy Efficiency & Conservation Act (FEECA) without a feasible alternative.</p> <p>Failure to stand up committee to explore improvements to energy efficiency.</p> <p>FACCE has not yielded any significant outcomes.</p>	<p>Modernize rather than replace FEECA.</p> <p>Establish and track internal DACS goals for emissions reduction, energy conservation and/or fleet electrification.</p> <p>Expand and activate the FACCE to study the state of climate impacts and the energy industry in Florida, and recommend renewable energy growth or transition strategies.</p>
APPOINTMENTS GRADE: C	<p>Appointment of Chris Pettit as "water czar" to develop/update and implement BMPs for agriculture.</p>	<p>Appointment of sugar industry lobbyists to represent FDACS on the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) project delivery team (the contract was subsequently terminated on 2/3/20).</p> <p>Appointment of sugar industry spokesperson to represent FDACS on the M-CORES Central-Southwest Connector Corridor Task Force.</p>	<p>An equitable distribution of appointments among all major stakeholders; Big Sugar is one of many and should not be allowed to dominate agency representation.</p>
CABINET VOTES GRADE: A	<p>As a member of the Cabinet:</p> <p>(1) Approved the purchase of valuable conservation lands with the funding allocated by the legislature.</p> <p>(2) Voted against a bad development permit in Martin County.</p>		<p>Acquire through fee simple or less than fee mechanisms sufficient conservation land to ensure future generations' ability to rely on sustainable ecosystem services, outdoor recreation lands, and wildlife/landscape/ecotourism resources.</p>

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ISSUE	WHAT HAPPENED		WHAT FLORIDA NEEDS
	GOOD	BAD	
RESPONSES TO OTHER STATE AGENCY ACTIONS GRADE: A	Opposed M-CORES.	Only opposed after Task Force reports released.	Repeal M-CORES.
RESPONSES TO FEDERAL AGENCY ACTIONS GRADE: B	<p>Urged EPA to reconsider a decision that would allow the use of phosphogypsum, a hazardous byproduct of phosphate mining, in building roads.</p> <p>Opposed 404 assumption by DEP and has called upon President Biden to reverse the approval.</p>	Supported offshore finfish aquaculture.	A vocal supporter of federal action that will protect rather than harm Florida's natural resources.



The overall grade is the average of all individual scores based on a point system (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0).
 2020 Commissioner of Agriculture & Consumer Services Report Card Release Date: 03/1/2021

A chapter of the national Sierra Club, Sierra Club Florida is made up of volunteer leaders and civic activists representing over 32,000 members from all over the state. Our mission is to enjoy, explore and protect the natural places in Florida, to teach others to understand and respect the fragile environment in which we live, and to practice and promote the responsible use of Florida's ecosystems and resources. The strength of the Chapter comes from the efforts of local, grass-roots volunteers in the 16 Sierra Club Groups across the state.

