



MARTIN COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2401 S.E. MONTEREY ROAD • STUART, FL 34996

Telephone: 772-288-5429
Fax: 772-2885955
Email: kfitzpat@martin.fl.us

DOUG SMITH
Commissioner, District 1

ED FIELDING
Commissioner, District 2

HAROLD E. JENKINS II
Commissioner, District 3

SARAH HEARD
Commissioner, District 4

EDWARD V. CIAMPI
Commissioner, District 5

TARYN KRYZDA, CPM
County Administrator

SARAH W. WOODS
Acting County Attorney

Ms. Jennifer Shadle
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 4
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

Dear Ms. Shadle,

Please accept this letter representing Martin County's full support for Dr. Voss's proposal for "Freshwater Discharge and Disease Impacts on Coral Reefs: Implications for Watershed Management in Southeast Florida". Both Dr. Voss and Mr. Beal are experts that assist Martin County with estuarine and marine related issues. They also join Martin County in advancing the mission of the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative, and in making progress to preserve and protect southeast Florida's coral reefs in cooperation with numerous partners.

Martin County played a significant role in advocating at both state and federal levels for improving water quality, particularly in the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoons. Water flowing from these lagoons enters the Atlantic Ocean through the County's St. Lucie Inlet where it immediately interacts with corals at the northernmost extent of the Florida Reef Tract. The County is closely tied to its waterways, and has suffered as estuarine resources have been severely degraded. Through initiatives backed by Martin County and in partnership with many other agencies, science-based knowledge has been gained on the causative factors behind this degradation with freshwater inflows from stormwater runoff, septic tank leaching, and discharges from Lake Okeechobee ranking high on this list. This understanding forms the basis for management strategies and informed decision-making that protect and restore valuable estuarine resources.

Sitting at the very north end of the Florida Reef Tract, the corals within St. Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park (SLIPSP) are unique in many aspects and require the highest level of protection. The research proposed by Dr. Voss and Mr. Beal fulfills a data gap that is essential to continued advocacy and protection of regionally significant marine resources. Using molecular coral health diagnostics, impacts can be sensed at sub lethal levels, allowing more precise quantification of management action impacts.

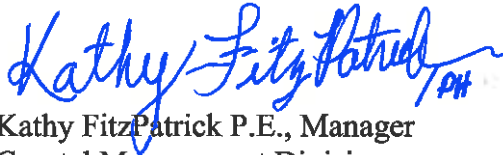
TELEPHONE
772-288-5400

WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.martin.fl.us>

Although restoration strategies for the adjacent estuarine system will certainly provide benefits to the SLIPSP corals, the intensive data collection and research approach outlined in Dr. Voss's proposal is integral to understanding the effectiveness of those restoration actions and will directly inform and focus future actions. This type of science is essential to the resource management and restoration investment decisions that have the potential to preserve and protect coral reefs.

Thank you for your consideration of our strong support for this proposal, and we truly appreciate all of your effort in administering this important program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy FitzPatrick" with a stylized flourish at the end. The signature is written over the printed name.

Kathy FitzPatrick P.E., Manager
Coastal Management Division
Martin County Engineering Department