

Being environmentally sensitive doesn't bother me at all. I have to drink water, eat food and breathe air just like everyone else. Being environmentally stupid is something else.

If recent edicts and proposals coming out of federal, state and local departments, legislatures and commissions are any indication of the mentality of people charged with representing and serving the people, then there seems to be a need for a massive recall of many elected officials and firing of their appointed staff members.

Before I generalize too much I must recognize the thoughtful, rational people in government who understand that, as employees of the public, they represent all stakeholders in a contentious issue. They are duty-bound to look at all the evidence and facts and do what's best for everyone. I commend the staff members in the Florida DOACS and DEP and the water management districts who are working with the

green and ag industries in Florida to find practical, responsible solutions.

What boggles my mind is the sheer arrogance and/or ignorance of some regulators who come up some real boneheaded decisions that miss real opportunities for improvements. For instance:

- In Houston, home of the petroleum refining industry, local officials are fighting air pollution by banning the use of leaf blowers and other small engine tools during the morning hours to prevent smog build up during the day. It makes it seem as though the officials are doing something, but it doesn't really address the major causes of air pollution in a large, bustling, industrial city.

- In Minnesota, there are folks concerned about phosphorus pollution of the lakes. The only phosphorus they are going after is that used on golf courses and home lawns. Those concerned choose to ignore agriculture, nursery production, industry, septic tanks, and natural decay of the annual leaf fall. The fact that surrounding states have found no direct link from lawn fertilizing to lake pollution doesn't not impress the officials. Minnesota hasn't

done such a study, so it doesn't count.

- In New Jersey, this year's drought brought swift targeting of golf courses as big water wasters. The fact that golf courses accounted for only .003% of the state's water consumption did not impress anyone. Once again fair and meaningful restrictions on all users were ignored in favor of hitting the easy target. Late breaking news indicates New Jersey is going to study the feasibility of using effluent water on golf courses. Maybe there's hope yet.

- In New York we won't mention the ban on spraying mosquitoes carrying the West Nile Virus, but rather talk about the proposed ban on using industrial-strength pesticides on public lands. When the staff of the sponsor of the bill was asked what constitutes an industrial-strength pesticide, they couldn't define it. However, they will be producing a brochure at taxpayers' expense to warn the public about the dangers of being exposed to an industrial-strength pesticide, whatever that is! Don't people already know that pesticides can be dangerous if not used properly?

- Here in Florida, water is doled out during drought conditions by designating days of the week to water. This might work under certain conditions, but consider this goofy scenario: In one city even the people who had effluent irrigation systems had to abide by the water ban. The result: unused effluent water is being dumped directly into a pristine river. Go figure. Maybe it was too hard for the water police to figure out who was on gray water and who was on potable. So the environment loses out in the long run.

Which brings to mind a recent conversation I had with a superintendent who got a call from an irate citizen who lives along his golf course. The person called condemning him for having a lush green golf course in the face of this horrible devastating drought. When the superintendent calmly explained that he was watering with 100% effluent water, the caller only replied, "Well, I don't care. You're not doing your part!"

All of these examples just go to prove that we have a lot of educating to do not only to the regulators and legislators but the general public as well. We can't let people in authority use weird science to make decisions that can affect our lives.

Weird Science

Green Side Up



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