



Marine Resources Council of East Florida, Inc.  
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June 21, 2021

Bill Nelson, Administrator

NASA Headquarters  
300 E. Street SW, Suite 5R30  
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Senator Nelson,

Congratulations on your well-deserved appointment as NASA Administrator. We in the Indian River Lagoon watershed, as do most Americans, trust you are the best person for the job.

Our Indian River Lagoon (IRL) is in crisis. The North IRL is graded F in both water quality and sea grass habitat by the Marine Resources Council Lagoon Report. Our signature manatees are dying in record numbers. Starving because there is little seagrass forage. Much of the IRL water quality problem is the result of past land management decisions that have been made with little regard for their effects on our lagoon. Major industries, commercial fishing and eco-tourism, valued at billions, have been lost and jobs gone. You may be aware that Brevard County voted in 2016 for a ½ cent sales tax generating nearly \$500M over 10-years for restoration and many are working to correct and repair the damage to the lagoon. This may not be enough.

Now new development, especially in the North IRL, and driven by space industry expansion, is growing at a record pace. The built environment with its polluting effect on air and water quality threatens to overwhelm attempts to restore the lagoon. The balance and coordination between this development and local environmental needs must be improved to produce a dynamic and sustainable community.

We support the planned growth of NASA Kennedy Space Center (KSC) as a public-private partnership. We are encouraged to learn that KSC is working toward a Lagoon Health Management Plan. We understand that this management plan is not subject to the NEPA process. We ask that you establish real time participation by local environmental scientists in the KSC planning process to ensure that impact on the lagoon will be a decision priority going forward.

We believe that development of KSC, done with full attention being given to its impact on water quality, will produce sustainability in KSC's future as the world's leading space port while ensuring the future of our devastated North Indian River Lagoon. We look forward to assisting NASA KSC, with our deep knowledge and understanding of lagoon problems, in this endeavor.

Best wishes for much success in your new position as NASA Administrator.