

Fossil-fuel addicted utility companies are backing bills that would make it harder for Florida homeowners to recoup the cost of [installing solar panels](#). Will the state's legislature remain in their pockets and deal this devastating blow to renewable energy?

This is shaping up as THE conservation issue in Florida for 2022.

LINK: <https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2021/12/23/the-florida-legislature-could-send-the-cost-of-solar-through-the-roof-column/>

You can take action by telling your legislators to [vote "no" on these anti-clean energy bills](#).

LINK: <https://click.everyaction.com/k/39791150/321425033/508394417>

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Florida prohibits developers from burying gopher tortoises in their burrows, requiring them to relocate the animals out of harm's way. But sprawl has destroyed so much of the tortoises' habitat that there are fewer and fewer places to relocate them. Instead of working to protect more habitat, state officials recently issued an order to [make it easier for developers to keep building](#) — weakening rules that protect the imperiled animals during the relocation process.

Not only is the order bad for tortoises, it signals the agency's larger failure to prioritize the habitat these animals need to survive. Weak protections for gopher tortoise habitat means weak protections for the hundreds of other species that use tortoise burrows as their homes — and the very best parts of wild Florida, from pine sandhills to oak scrub.

Tell state wildlife officials to reverse damaging ruling:

<https://click.everyaction.com/k/39845919/321710674/-381396805?>

This past fall on my "Welcome to Florida" podcast, an entire episode was [devoted to the gopher tortoise](#) and the constant battle to protect them from development.

LINK: <https://www.stitcher.com/show/welcome-to-florida/episode/episode-64-gopher-tortoise-86612331>

Speaking of my podcast, I co-host it with the state's leading environmental reporter, Craig Pitman. Craig will be in Fernandina Beach [January 15 speaking and signing copies of his book](#) at Story and Song bookstore.

More information: <https://www.storyandsongbookstore.com/specialevents>

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As if the news on gopher tortoise wasn't bad enough, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to weaken or end protections for [key deer, whooping cranes and the Florida Panther](#).

LINK: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/us-fish-and-wildlife-service-plans-to-gut-protections-for-whooping-crane-florida-panther-key-deer-2021-12-13/>