

Did you know that more than a hundred local governments throughout the country have enacted laws banning plastic carryout bags and Styrofoam to-go containers, but [that in Florida, it's illegal for any local jurisdiction to ban plastic or polystyrene](#). Illegal!

Leave it to the Florida legislature to prioritize the “rights” of plastic bags and Styrofoam over those of the environment.

Anyone who's ever done a beach cleanup knows how nasty these products are and the amount of trash they contribute, trash which ends up choking or suffocating to death birds, turtles, fish and other marine animals and breaks down into the trillions of pieces of microplastic polluting the ocean. In Florida, those products are protected by law.

Ask yourself who that benefits and you'll find out who our politicians are working for.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2023/11/29/more-states-are-banning-plastic-bags-florida-is-not-among-them/>

Restoration of [oyster reefs in Apalachicola Bay](#) is showing promising results, [too bad Florida politicians don't care enough](#) about the seafood industry or food chain to concern themselves at all with ocean acidification resulting from global warming.

As the ocean absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere, carbon pumped up there by the burning of fossil fuels, the ocean's pH balance, evolved over millions of years, has changed. The increased acidity makes it more difficult for shellfish to create their shells. Shrimp, oysters, scallops, mussels, clams... plankton, krill... the base of the food chain is at great risk from ocean acidification which is too far advanced to stop.

LINK: https://www.nature.org/en-us/newsroom/florida-pensacola-east-bay-oyster-habitat-restoration/?en_txn1=e.ch_fl.eg.x.gpn.1206.n.sas.loc_fl&en_txn8=NewSch.WJEMSA2312NPNZNZZE02Z00-ZZZZ-ST00&lu=72cbb21b-3a33-4505-b2f6-1dc548534a04&customer_id=19567367

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2023/12/07/as-ocean-turns-more-acidic-florida-officials-ignore-warning-signs/>

Good news: the Bureau of Land Management has finally decided to [stop using M-44 “cyanide bombs”](#) on the millions of acres of land it controls. Cyanide bombs have long been used to kill “nuisance” predators – so determined largely by ranchers in the West – wolves, coyotes, foxes. Ranchers and the cattle industry out West have about as much stroke as developers and builders do in Florida – all of it.

In addition to killing millions of native carnivores over the years, the cyanide bombs would also kill down the food chain on the scavengers who ate the carcasses of the animals murdered by the poison.

LINK: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/fish-and-wildlife>

A good, [brief history of the Florida panther](#), it's near extinction and the efforts to resuscitate the species.

LINK: <https://www.refugeassociation.org/news/2023/11/16/florida-panther?sourceid=1080144&emci=88e14c1b-a388-ee11-8925-00224832e811&emdi=84c2da77-048e-ee11-8924-6045bdd47111&ceid=1332102>

Here's one that will sound familiar to Fernandina Beach residents. Lee County commissioners voted 4-1 to approve changes to the county's comprehensive plan removing longstanding building-height limitations governing Captiva Island.

Their vote to approve the amendments came despite an extremely strong showing of support from both the Captiva and Sanibel communities, citing increased density and intensity of development, strains on limited island infrastructure and natural resources, and the absence of any real need to make these changes to build back structures destroyed by Hurricane Ian.

In unincorporated Nassau County, a developer wants to construct Daytona Beach-style high rise condos unlike anything else seen there on 50 undeveloped acres adjacent to Amelia Island State Park. Nassau County did not have a building height restriction, unlike Fernandina Beach, which does, prior to 2022. That year, commissioners voted to approve a height restriction, but backtracked on the measure this past summer under the threat of litigation from the developer claiming the measure would damage its ability to profit from the property.

The county has since been sued by a homeowner's group next door to the proposed development which opposes it.

Point is, no matter where you go in Florida, developers win, the environment loses, and what citizens want doesn't count.