

GOOD NEWS: The Florida State Senate followed the House and removed provisions from a bill which would have required losing parties to pay the legal fees of defendants when challenging Department of Environmental Protection rulings. Forcing non-profits and citizens to pay the legal fees of defendants in the case of a loss would have prevented many of them from pursuing legal action in protection of the environment.

This measure was overturned solely because the state's conversation groups and residents pressured the legislature to drop it.

At the same time, the legislature is attempting to prevent local governments across the state from [regulating the use of single use plastics](#). As we all know, single use plastics are the primary source of trash on our beaches, springs, and forests, not to mention a major contributor to climate change ... plastic is made from oil.

While more and more cities and states across the country are seeking to limit the use of single use plastics, or ban them outright, the Florida legislature wants to make it impossible to do so,

You can voice your opinion here in opposition to the bill:

<https://floridaspringscouncil.good.do/2024legislativesession/Community-Affairs-Stop-SB-1126/>

Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority will be voting soon to place a permanent restaurant on the old Jacksonville Landing site. This is bad news for many reasons.

One, this area should be protected as green space, park space, accessible to the community. Two, there is plenty of room downtown for siting restaurants on private land, not public land. This property is owned by the city, by the people, and should not be given to private business. Three, restaurants on the Landing site have already failed – spectacularly – before. Why do it again.

If you're a Jacksonville resident, you can [contact the Downtown Investment Authority](#) to propose placing a restaurant – or any development – on the old Landing site.

LINK: <https://dia.coj.net/about/DIA-Board-of-Directors>

Twin Pines, the company seeking permitting to open a giant mine on the doorstep of the Okefenokee Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, has been [fined by Georgia environmental regulators](#) after violating state law when collecting soil samples in the area. The company has a long history of noncompliance with environmental regulations.

LINK: <https://www.gpb.org/news/2024/01/24/company-seeking-mine-near-okefenokee-will-pay-20000-settle-environmental-violation>

A juvenile right whale was found [entangled and dead](#) off Martha's Vineyard.

LINK: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/01/29/endangered-right-whale-population-north-atlantic/72399893007/>

Podcast from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration about efforts to [restore Florida's coral reefs](#).

LINK: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/podcast/restoring-floridas-iconic-coral-reefs?utm_campaign=2024-01-25+SFN&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Pew&subscriberkey=00Q7V00001hmH4vUAE