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Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2003 10:32 AM

To: Jeb@MyFlorida.com; Ken.Haddad@FWC.state.fl.us

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Subject: Concerning the staph infections of fishermen in Volusia County

Governor Bush,

It is puzzling and scary to think that fishermen, swimmers and visitors to our great beaches in Volusia County have to worry about contracting staph infection from going into the ocean.

There is factual documentation from reputable physicians that the staph infection has been found on commercial fishermen and others in the Volusia County, Florida area. The question from our perception is where does staph come from and why is it just showing up in Volusia County if in fact that is the only place it is showing up.

As one of my friends who works in the ocean as a professional said today, "***My experience suggests that the staphylococcus infections result from illegal dumping of medical wastes into the ocean, leaking septic tanks, or incomplete water treatment from municipal treatment plants or cruise ships that pipe their wastewater offshore.***"

The pollution of our bays and estuaries seem to be getting more and more serious each year. We have the natural phenomenon of red tide and the man induced "Dead Zone" off the mouth of the Mississippi River. We are dumping hundreds of millions of gallons of phosphate wastewater in the Gulf of Mexico that is being transported to the other side of Florida through the action of the currents. Additionally we have hundreds of millions of gallons of wastewater being dumped into the Atlantic Ocean from ocean outfalls in southeast Florida that might also be contributing to the degradation of water quality. Could this staph infection that is randomly attacking fishermen be a wake up call to do something about all the pollution going into our waters?

This situation cannot and should not be laid at the foot of your administration but your watch is all we can deal with at this time. I can't stress the importance of this situation to OUR Florida.

The Florida seafood industry wants to know what is going on and how severe the problem is and how severe it might become. If the fishermen are getting the staph, could it also be in the fish? Is the ocean water being tested by any agency?

The economic disaster lurking offshore is beyond my comprehension. Tourism fuels Florida and if the tourists are concerned for their well being and that of their children everyone knows they will go elsewhere.

Please let us and all other interested parties know what is going on concerning the staph infections in Volusia County and bring us to a table to put our waters back to as close as pristine as possible during our lifetimes.

Thank you,

Bob Jones

Southeastern Fisheries Association

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