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Fried Asks New EPA Head To Reconsider Recent Fla. Wetlands Permitting Move

By NEWS SERVICE OF FLORIDA STAFF • DEC 31, 2020

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State Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried has asked incoming Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan to reconsider a recent EPA decision that shifted federal permitting authority to Florida for projects that affect wetlands.

Fried released a letter Wednesday that she sent to Regan, who has been tapped by President-elect Joe Biden to lead the EPA.

Supporters this month praised the Trump administration's decision to shift the permitting authority to Florida, saying it would help reduce duplicative state and federal permitting and give Florida more control over such decisions.

Florida is only the third state, joining Michigan and New Jersey, that have received the authority, according to the EPA.

Related: [Trump Administration Lets State Take Lead On Development Permits For Wetlands](#)

But some environmentalists have long opposed the move, arguing it would reduce protections for wetlands.

“With the vast majority of public comments opposed, as well as numerous environmental conservation groups, I ask you to reconsider the EPA’s decision to cede their authority to an unprepared state agency,” Fried, the only statewide elected Democrat, wrote to Regan, referring to the state Department of Environmental Protection.

In the letter, Fried also asked Regan to reconsider a decision that would allow the use of phosphogypsum, a hazardous byproduct of phosphate mining, in building roads.