

**Yvette Gillespie**

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**From:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2024 4:56 PM  
**To:** Commissioner Correspondence  
**Subject:** FW: FNPS Communication Regarding SB 1645 Energy Resources  
**Attachments:** Veto Request for HB 1645\_Energy Resources\_FNPS\_03172024\_FINAL.pdf

Please place the email below and attachment in Docket No. 20240000.

Thank you.

**From:** Eugene Kelly <gmkelly@tampabay.rr.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2024 8:19 AM  
**To:** 'GovernorRon.Desantis@eog.myflorida.com' <GovernorRon.Desantis@eog.myflorida.com>  
**Cc:** 'Shawn.Hamilton@floridadep.gov' <Shawn.Hamilton@floridadep.gov>; Office of Chairman La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; 'executivedirector@fnps.org' <executivedirector@fnps.org>; 'communications@fnps.org' <communications@fnps.org>; 'travis@moore-relations.com' <travis@moore-relations.com>; 'mkateli@fnps.org' <mkateli@fnps.org>  
**Subject:** FNPS Communication Regarding SB 1645 Energy Resources

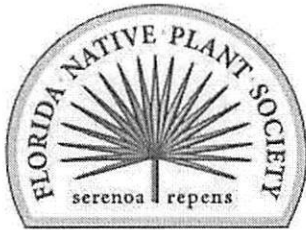
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Dear Governor DeSantis:

The attached letter is submitted for your consideration, on behalf of the Florida Native Plant Society and our 5,000+ members. Thank you for considering our concerns.

Eugene Kelly, Policy and Legislation Chair

Florida Native Plant Society



## FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Po Box 278  
Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

March 18, 2024

Governor Ron DeSantis  
The Florida Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

### **SUBJECT: Please Veto Regressive Energy Resources Legislation CS/CS/HB 1645**

Dear Governor DeSantis:

The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) recognizes the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to meet Florida's long-term energy needs. Unfortunately, the Legislature has proposed substantial modifications to our energy policy through HB 1645 that are alarmingly regressive. We ask that you veto HB 1645 and direct the Legislature to go back to the drawing board. While some adjustments to current policy may be justified in response to changing circumstances and technologies, none of the provisions contained in HB 1645 address urgently pressing needs, and a rethinking of HB 1645 would be more prudent than approval and implementation as currently proposed.

The FNPS mission to conserve Florida's native plants and native plant communities requires that we adopt an expansive view of the threats they face. Coastal wetlands and aquatic plant communities are imperiled by sea level rise and intensified storms and coastal flooding, and the changing temperatures and precipitation patterns associated with climate change are imposing stresses that have induced observable impacts to native flora across the state. These impacts to plants are likewise inducing a chain of cascading impacts to native wildlife, including especially pollinators, that will only increase over time.

The most disturbing aspect of HB 1645 may be the fundamental re-framing of Florida's approach to energy production and management portended by deleting references to climate change and any recognition of the imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Legislative intent of our energy policy (see 377.601) would be reduced to ensuring "... *an adequate, reliable, and cost-effective supply of energy for the state in a manner that promotes the health and welfare of the public and economic growth*". Extracting any consideration of the causes and consequences of climate change will make them no less real, and it is difficult to understand how "the health and welfare of the public and economic growth" can be effectively accounted for by denying the realities of climate change and its myriad impacts on the environment, economy, and quality of life shared by all Floridians.

*Preserving, conserving and restoring the native plants and native plant communities of Florida*

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HB 1645's abdication of thoughtful leadership on energy policy could not be reflected any more clearly than in the deletion (see 286.29) of "...*The Legislature recognizes the importance of leadership by state government in the area of energy efficiency and in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of state government operations.*"

While the state is poised to abdicate leadership and no longer wishes to serve as an example of thoughtful energy policy, business and industry increasingly recognize the benefits of embracing renewable energy and new technologies. What business would decline to consider fuel efficiency when adding new vehicles to their inventory? HB 1645 deletes current direction to state agencies, universities, colleges and local governments to consider fuel efficiency when procuring fleet vehicles under state purchasing plans. Providing greater flexibility in the state's vehicle procurement decisions may be warranted; however, rejecting consideration of fuel efficiency when purchasing vehicles is neither thoughtful energy policy, nor fiscally responsible.

A cursory review of the state budget forwarded for your approval reveals the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services would receive more than \$1.9 million for motor vehicle purchases. The total allocated for vehicle purchases across the entire budget is MUCH greater. It is not our intention to question the motor vehicle needs of FDACS, or any other such allocation in the proposed budget. We only wish to highlight the scale of the cost savings, and the magnitude of potential reductions in greenhouse gas emissions over time, that could be achieved by a veto of HB 1645 based solely on rejection of this provision of the bill.

One of the signature achievements of your governorship has been adoption of an ambitious approach to promoting coastal resiliency through creation of the Office of Resilience and Coastal Flooding, and the Resilient Florida Grant Program. Resiliency to coastal flooding and sea level rise is critically important in Florida. HB 1645 would not only preempt local government authority to decide where natural gas facilities should be sited within their own communities – it perverts the very meaning of resiliency by defining natural gas storage and distribution facilities as "*resiliency facilities*". This section of HB 1645 is especially incoherent. What is the legislature's intent, beyond imposing additional limits on home rule authority?

There are other problematic provisions in HB 1645. We believe those we have detailed above are sufficient to justify a veto, and again contend that nothing in this legislation is so time-critical that it demands immediate action. Energy policy is too important to be based on a rush-job, and the widespread public opposition to this bill expressed during committee hearings underscored its many shortcomings. Please direct the Legislature to come back with a better bill next year.

Thank you for considering our concerns, and for your efforts to protect Florida's natural resources and economy while also ensuring a secure energy future for its citizens.

Sincerely,



Mark Kateli, President  
Florida Native Plant Society

cc: Shawn Hamilton, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Mike La Rosa, Chair of the Florida Public Service Commission

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