

Letter to the Editor

World War III?

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The sabers are rattling for what may be an environmental equivalent of World War III.

You're invited to this court version of the Boston Tea Party.

Citizens have had enough.

Senseless pollution of our estuaries absolutely will not be stopped by our government invertebrates. Only a court can do the job.

It's a job that may well send welcome waves through many of Florida's waterways, and even to other states due to its ground-breaking potential.

The idea is simple enough: Citizens have a legal right to enjoy clean water next to them.

A government that lets that right be trampled on, as with the longstanding contamination of the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers, can be sued to bring a halt to the damages its conduct is causing.

The prestigious, non-profit law firm Earthjustice (see [Earthjustice.org](http://Earthjustice.org)) is working with nationally known specialists to research all the possibilities.

A successful action would require tremendous tenacity, time and funding.

"Well," say many citizens, "it's a no-brainer that this kind of pollution must be illegal, so let's get on with it."

In a nutshell, the problem is that Lake Okeechobee is kept way too high and ridden with phosphorus, whereupon 500 billion gallons of the dark water is gushed out to both coasts. It's part of our wonderful Drainage Machine that protects the Everglades Agricultural Area (Big Sugar) from getting its little roots even a little damp.

In consequence, Lake O and the estuaries are virtually ruined. No less than the Florida Department of Health warned Martin County residents not to "make contact" with the St. Lucie River water.

For what experts say is North America's most biologically diverse and beautiful river, the invading pollution through man-made canals is nothing short of astounding.

It's been tolerated only because we become tired and numb.

But no more.

To the west of the big lake, the Caloosahatchee has suffered basically the same invasion of ooze, though effects there have only recently reached the fire-alarm stage. Some Fort Myers officials believe that if we weigh Big Sugar's manipulated drainage against the well-being of huge communities, it's time to let the ag region take on and store water just as Mother Nature intended, and did for thousands of years.

Meanwhile, sugar money by the millions and the politicians it orchestrates are intensifying disinformation campaigns.

But grassroots folks can prevail—if we really go to the trenches.

Please visit [Riverscoalition.org](http://Riverscoalition.org) to review the background and determine how you can help. Also, see [Lakeokeechobee.org](http://Lakeokeechobee.org).

Lastly, a warning: There are many in high places who think our rivers are expendable. Let's show them they have another think coming.

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