

From: Blackburn, Steven (EPA.gov)
To: Caron Balkany, Esq.
Date: Fri, Jun 26, 2020 6:14 pm

Dear Ms. Balkany,

Thank you for the April 29, 2020, letter to the FKNMS Water Quality Protection Program expressing the concern of Florida Key residents that wastewater and stormwater effluent from shallow wells may be impacting water quality in the nearshore waters of the Florida Keys.

While the Steering Committee has been unable to meet as a group since November of last year due to COVID, the Management and Technical Committees of the WQPP have held online meetings to follow-up on this concern. Activities to date:

- The WQPP Steering Committee at the November 13, 2019, meeting directed the Management Committee to identify and rank priority water quality improvement activities for the next Steering Committee.
- WQPP Management Committee meetings were held and draft WQPP priority recommendations have been identified for presentation at the next SC (online) meeting scheduled for late summer (August?). **Shallow well injection is one of the "draft" priorities for presentation to the Steering Committee.**
- The **Management Committee identified research and the monitoring of shallow injection wells to assess potential impact to nearshore water quality has a priority for EPA WQPP Special Studies funding.**
- **EPA identified *Wastewater Shallow Injection Wells Impacts and Stormwater Pollutant Reduction Projects* has priorities for WQPP Special Study funding. The EPA SFL RFA is scheduled to be published on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) next week (I will provide the link when the RFA is published).**
- The WQPP Technical Advisory Committee, facilitated by FDEP and NOAA, met today (June 26, 2020) to explore research ideas to address concerns described in the April 29, 2020, letter; and to **develop a study to investigate the possibility that AWT wastewater injected into shallow wells is migrating via karst conduits into surface waters at levels that contribute to degradation of water quality in nearshore waters.**

In the future, I will share information and efforts by the FKNMS WQPP Committees regarding the investigation of shallow well injection as it becomes available.

Thank you for your interest, Steve