

Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, along with the undersigned citizens, businesses and organizations, calls on all state, federal and local agencies to reduce and expeditiously eliminate the use of harmful glyphosate in state waterways.

Florida is the Fishing Capital of the World. Its fisheries contribute more than \$13 billion in annual economic impact, supporting the livelihoods of Floridians and attracting anglers worldwide. It is essential that the water and habitat necessary to support them are carefully stewarded.

One of the greatest threats to Florida's fisheries is poor water quality resulting from excessive nutrients and contaminants. One contaminant that has long been a concern for anglers is glyphosate—the effective ingredient in weedkiller. Glyphosate is used extensively throughout Florida and other states for everything from agriculture to aquatic weed control. Until now, it has been believed that glyphosate does not remain in the ecosystem for very long and is limited in its impacts to fish and wildlife.

Ongoing research by the non-profit Ocean Research and Conservation Association (ORCA) has provided evidence that glyphosate not only remains in the ecosystem but can also be found in fish. ORCA recently sampled 125 fish from the Indian River Lagoon and found glyphosate in every fish sampled. The fish could be ingesting glyphosate from the water or from eating prey that are contaminated. This means that glyphosate is impacting the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem and is likely present in Florida's other estuaries and freshwater lakes and rivers. Previous research conducted by the University of Florida showed that glyphosate caused significant health issues for largemouth bass, including impacting reproduction. We expect similar results for marine fishes. The human health consequences of eating glyphosate-contaminated fish or consuming contaminated water are largely unknown.

We believe the solution to this problem is straightforward – reduce and eventually eliminate the use of glyphosate in our waterways. We call on federal, state and local agencies that use glyphosate to control aquatic weeds in freshwater systems – lakes, rivers, canals – to take immediate steps to reduce and eventually eliminate glyphosate, thereby preventing its flow into Florida's estuaries. These agencies should explore and implement other weed control measures, including new methods of mechanical harvesting, and making use of the harvested biomass.

BTT and the citizens, businesses and organizations signing below call on all agencies that are tasked with aquatic plant management to ensure the long-term health of Florida's environment and fisheries by working to eliminate use of glyphosate as a management tool. The use of glyphosate for weed control may be cheaper than harvest in the short-term, but the long-term impacts are negative and clear. Invest in the future!