

Unique Circumstances Place Florida Citizens at Risk

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- *Inadequate funding of petroleum contamination clean up could impact the drinking water of more than 15 million residents.*¹
- *Florida ranks first in the nation for the number of people drinking groundwater*¹
- *Florida ranks last among all states in clean up percentage*²
- *Florida has the largest backlog of contaminated sites waiting to be cleaned up*²

Contamination of groundwater is a public health concern that directly affects over 15 million Florida citizens from all congressional districts. **Eighty Seven percent of Florida's population**¹ depends on groundwater for their daily drinking water and that source of water is threatened by petroleum contamination. According to Lynn Stovall, President of AWWA, "secure water supply is a cornerstone of homeland security."³

The solution exists. To protect against possible contamination of Floridians' drinking water, expanded state funding of the FDEP petroleum clean up program through the **Inland Protection Trust Fund** is critical. This fund is for remediation of petroleum contamination from defunct or insolvent sites, state insurance program sites, and two amnesty programs from the 1980's and mid-1990's. These programs have been closed for at least eight years. Revenue for this fund is generated from taxes paid by the petroleum industry on petroleum products imported into Florida. It is unavoidable that as State revenues erode challenging funding choices will have to be made. However, it is critical that the highest priority be given to protecting our public drinking water system. The facts defining this public health issue are incontrovertible.

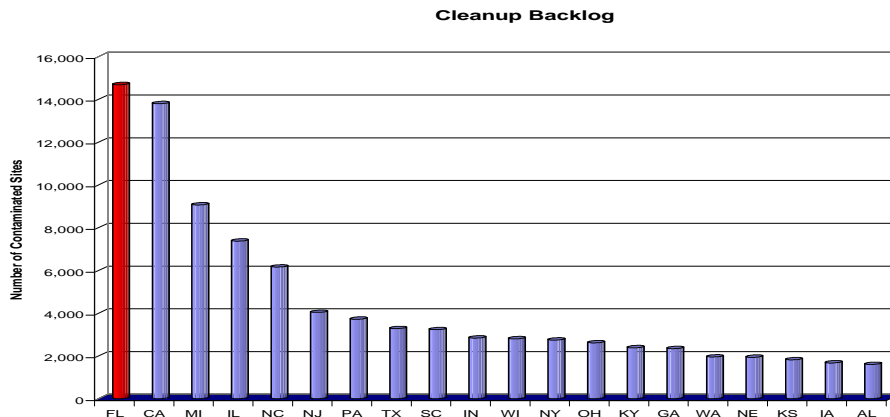


Figure 1. Florida has more contaminated petroleum sites to be cleaned up than any other state including California.

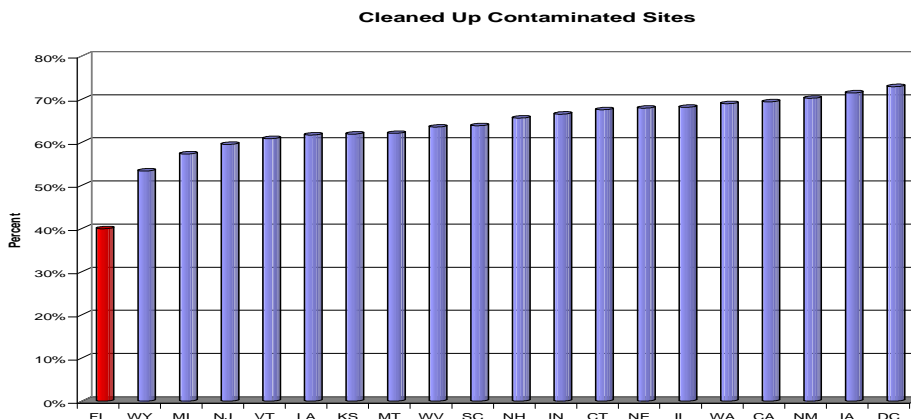


Figure 2. The national average for the percentage of sites cleaned up is 74%. Florida ranks last in this category having cleaned up only 40% of the contaminated sites



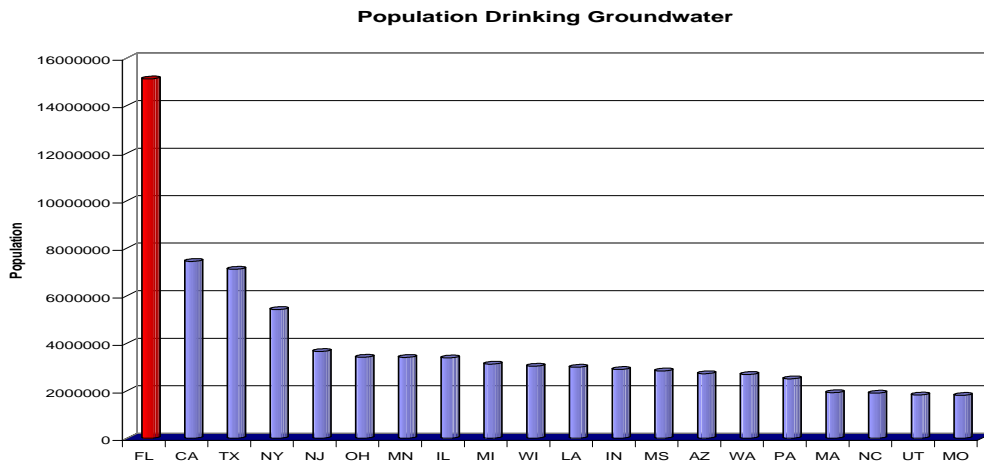


Figure 2. Florida ranks first in the number of people drinking groundwater.

Florida’s shallow aquifers and porous soils contribute to the groundwater contamination problem. Also contributing to the problem is the proximity of contaminated sites to drinking water sources. Almost all of this water is derived from wells, many of which are in close proximity to the historical petroleum discharges. The significance of that can be visualized by mapping wells and USTs on the same map. The following map is for Lee County and uses data supplied by the Florida Department of Health⁴ and the FDEP. Similar maps can be generated for other regions.

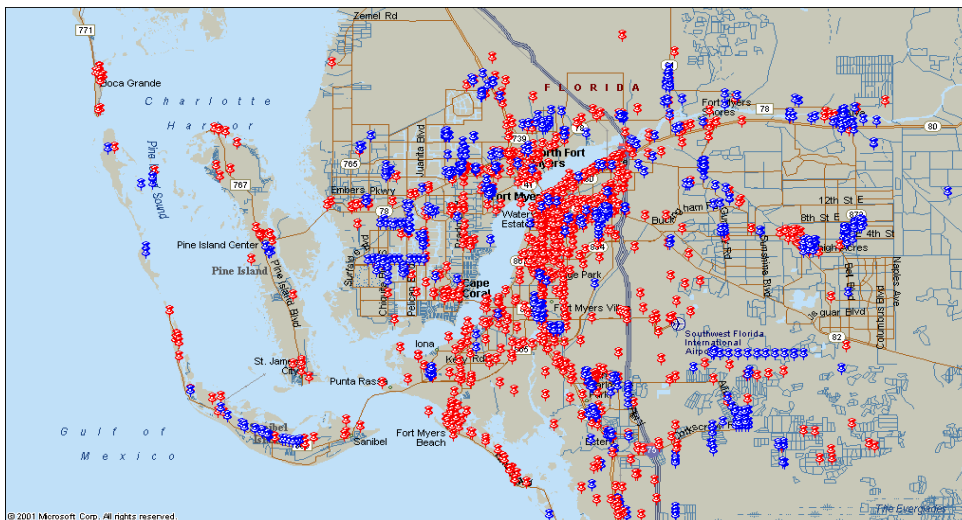


Figure 3. Wells and contaminated sites overlap. Red markers are tanks and blue are wells.

There are mountains of data and thousands of reports that document the contamination problem. Without a reasonable level of State funds, the clean up of petroleum contaminated sites will be greatly reduced because many site owners lack personal resources to remediate their sites. Migration of volatile organic compounds and additives such as MtBE would occur and potentially impact drinking water sources that are not currently impacted. If work on contaminated properties is postponed, significant concerns to one of Florida’s greatest resources would be exacerbated. Funding must continue, or the momentum gained by recent progress in the program will be lost.

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/data/pivottables.html>
² http://www.epa.gov/swrust1/cat/ca_07_12.pdf
³ <http://www.awwa.org/Advocacy/pressroom/pr/index.cfm?ArticleID=163>
⁴ <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/ENVIRONMENT/water/petroleum/saindex.html>

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