



**CHARLIE CRIST**  
GOVERNOR

June 26, 2007

Mr. Kurt S. Browning  
Secretary of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 S. Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Secretary Browning:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby withhold my approval of and transmit to you my objections to, Council Substitute for House Bill 981, enacted during the 109<sup>th</sup> Session of the Legislature of Florida, since statehood in 1845, during the Regular Session of 2007 and entitled:

An act relating to state parks. . .

This bill defines violations and penalties for activities in state parks; discounts entry fees to state parks for active National Guard members and their families; and modifies certain conditions relating to the operation of the Babcock Ranch Preserve.

While I support the provisions related to our state parks, I have concerns with the provisions related to the Babcock Ranch Preserve. This nearly 75,000 acre property presents an exceptional and first of its kind opportunity for preserving conservation lands and promoting recreational opportunities. Tremendous amounts of time, energy, and money have been spent to make the Babcock Ranch Preserve a successful venture for the citizens of this state. A contract which includes a management agreement has been executed by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Board) and a management plan is under development. Preservation of natural resources, hunting and bonafide agricultural practices are important elements of the ranch's heritage and value and were carefully considered by the Board in the creation of the management agreement.

However, portions of this legislation circumvent the management agreement and alter provisions related to hunting and tenant farming on the ranch. I do not support any effort to bypass the Board on these critical issues with piece-meal legislation that alters portions of an existing management agreement. Instead, I direct the Department of Environmental Protection and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to ensure that a comprehensive plan is implemented to manage this invaluable state resource.

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Finally, I applaud the provision in this legislation which honors the men and women of our Florida National Guard by reducing the price of admission to any state park by 50 percent for an active guard member and their families. I greatly admire our Florida National Guard and will pay tribute to them and their families by issuing Executive Order 07-116 to implement the fee reductions provided for in this legislation.

For the reasons stated above, I am hereby withholding my approval of Council Substitute for House Bill 981 and hereby veto the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Charlie Crist

CC/dmm