



Job Bush
Governor

Department of Environmental Protection

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

David B. Strubbs
Secretary

March 16, 1999

The Honorable David Weldon
Congressman, District 15
332 Cannon
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0915

Dear Congressman Weldon:

This is to document the details of a phone conversation held with Mr. Stuart Burns of your staff regarding the interaction of manatees and personal watercraft in Florida. Based upon a review of 25 years of manatee mortality records, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has no verified records that implicate a personal watercraft caused the death or injury of a manatee. We have had one report from a death in Dade County where witnesses claimed that personal watercraft were noted in the vicinity immediately prior to a manatee carcass being sited. Unfortunately, upon examination, the carcass exhibited only those injuries considered indicative of a death caused by impact of a watercraft. We have no way to determine if the watercraft was a boat or a smaller jet ski type craft. I was also advised that a manatee that was killed in Puerto Rico was possibly linked to personal watercraft, however, I am not aware of any scientific evidence that is definitive in that case.

I hope this information is useful. If there are any additional questions, please have your staff contact me at (850)922-4330.

Sincerely,

David W. Arnold, Chief
Bureau of Protected Species Management

"Protect, Conserve and Manage Florida's Environment and Natural Resources"

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