FLORIDA EMBRACES 21ST CENTURY ENERGY POLICY
Governor Crist Leads with Executive Order
– By George Cavros, Conservation Chair

With the stroke of a pen, Governor Crist ushered in a brave new energy future for Florida. On July 13, 2007 at a Climate Summit held in Miami, he signed Executive Orders 07-126, 127 and 128 that will ultimately provide the state more energy security, create jobs and protect the environment for future generations.

The Governor cited global climate change as one of the most important issues facing Florida and he committed Florida to becoming a leader in reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) in the preamble to the executive orders. In furtherance of that policy, he mandated executive agencies to promulgate the following rules and regulations:

- Immediate adoption of rules by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that reduce GHG emissions throughout the state to 2000 levels by 2017, to 1990 levels by 2025, and by 2050 reduce GHG levels to 80% of 1990 emissions.
- The Public Service Commission is charged with adopting a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that requires electric utilities to produce at least 20% of their electricity from renewable sources – with a strong emphasis on wind and solar (joining 22 other states with a RPS).
- Beginning with the 2009 model year, automakers will have to reduce GHG pollutants, such as carbon dioxide, by 25% for cars and 18% for sport utility vehicles, and the adoption of a statewide diesel idling reduction standard.
- The PSC must allow consumers to generate their own electricity and sell it back to the utility at the retail rate (net metering).
- A Governor-appointed Action Team on Energy and Climate will be appointed to make recommendations by November 1, 2007 to implement a cap and trade approach to reducing GHG emissions and propose strategies for coordination of energy policy in Florida.
- State agencies and departments will have to reduce GHG emissions faster than the rest of the state: 10% from current levels by 2012, 25% lower than current levels by 2017, and 40% lower than current levels by 2025 – thereby leading by example.

continued on page 2
Broward Sierra Club’s General Meetings are held held the first Tuesday or Wednesday of every month (See schedule below). This month’s meeting and program will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 5th at the Anne Kolb Nature Center. Take I-95 to the Sheridan St. exit. Go East past Federal Hwy. The entrance to Anne Kolb Nature Center will be on your left (About 1/2 mile after the sign for West Lake Park on the right, before the Intracoastal Bridge - see map). Doors open at 7:00 PM. Committee reports begin at 7:30, and the program begins at 8:00. The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

Next month’s meeting will be back at the Fern Forest Nature Center.

Executive Committee Meetings
Held on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm, in room 430a of the Broward County Governmental Center. For details call Barbara Curtis at 954-946-7359 or e-mail her at Legalabarb@aol.com.

GENERAL MEETING SCHEDULE AND LOCATIONS
In order to make our meetings more accessible to members in both the Northern and Southern parts of Broward County, we will be meeting at Anne Kolb Nature Center on the first Wednesday of every odd numbered month, and at the Fern Forest Nature Center the first Tuesday of every even numbered month.

Wed., September 5th: Anne Kolb 
Tues., October 2nd: Fern Forest

Wed., November 7th: Anne Kolb 
Tues., December 4th: Fern Forest

Governor Crist, continued from page 1

I have often criticized state policy makers for their inability to think “outside the box” in creating a “clean energy economy” that would diversify Florida’s economic base while helping to reverse the worst impact of global climate change. Not anymore. Crist’s executive orders are everything we could have hoped for and more. Carl Haassen, of the Miami Herald, may have stated it best when he wrote: “it’s official: Charlie Crist is the un-Jeb . . . regardless of party affiliation, people want their children to have breathable air and drinkable water – and they’ll support candidates who feel the same way.” Crist, a populist politician, understands his constituents’ genuine concern about climate change and its impact on future generations – and acted on it.

The Climate Summit was the culmination of years of hard work by state-wide environmental groups in promoting clean energy policies, coupled with the election of a forward-thinking governor. The Summit also featured a rousing speech by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. attacking corporate polluters – focusing on how dirty utilities have gotten a “free ride” by letting society “pick up the tab” for negative environmental and health impacts on the ground caused by utility pollution. The finale also featured Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California. The “Terminator” remarked, “it’s time to say “hasta la vista” to greenhouse gases.” He warned that Crist’s bold initiatives would be attacked. Unfortunately, Schwarzenegger was right.

Not long after the Climate Summit, Florida House Speaker, Marco Rubio (R-Miami), focused his criticism in an editorial on the costs of moving to a clean energy economy. Rubio failed to explore the cost of inaction, of business as usual. What Crist understands is that global warming is one of the most important issues we face this century and that Florida is particularly vulnerable to the impacts. The crisis is so compelling that anything short of a major shift in the way we produce and consume energy will not be enough.

In October 2006, Nicholas Stern, former World Bank chief economist, released a report for the British government. He found that prudent action today would cost less than adapting to a warming world. His conclusion is that if we don’t act, “the overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5 percent of global Gross Domestic Product each year, now and forever. If a wider range of risks and impacts is taken into account, the estimates of damage could rise to 20 percent of GDP or more.”

It is a mistake to assume that emissions reductions will result in rising electric costs. According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, policy changes to promote efficiency (such as those in the Governor’s executive orders) can help Florida consumers save up to $25 billion in lower electric bills and simultaneously create up to 12,000 new jobs over the next 15 years. The cheapest kilowatt-hour is the one not used.

Now that the Governor has laid the framework for a clean energy future, the bigger challenge lies ahead in ensuring that the executive agencies issue rules that effectively carry out the Governor’s mandates. This will require the continued diligence of the environmental community. As you’ve come to expect, the Sierra Club will continue to keep you informed as Florida positions itself as a national leader on clean energy.
We would like to invite you to come on one of our fine educational outings! If you have any questions about an outing, you can check with the certified Broward Sierra Outing Leader in charge of the outing. Some of the outings need no experience; others require some level of proficiency. All participants in Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate in an outing, contact the leader of the outing or go to <www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms>.

For sign-up, payment and further information, please contact the outing leader.

You may call the Sierra Hotline for updates at 954-567-2841 LOOK FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE: <http://florida.sierraclub.org/broward>
Join the Sierra Club and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag! (While supplies last)

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