

Citizens Not Serfs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Citizens Not Serfs' Launches Major Letter Writing Campaign

Summerland Key, FL (September 21, 2008) Citizens Not Serfs' members and supporters gathered on Sunday to launch a massive letter writing effort targeted at federal, state, and local officials addressing the organization's two goals: retaining the Florida Keys as an Area of Critical State Concern and working with FEMA to create a better solution regarding downstairs enclosures. Over 4,000 letters are expected to drop.

The Administrative Commission, composed of Governor Crist and his Cabinet, will be making a determination regarding the Florida Keys as an Area of Critical State Concern next week.

Letters in support of retaining the designation will be accompanied by the scientific poll conducted by Lake Research Partners in 2006 revealing that 82% of Keys' residents are opposed to lifting this vital designation which, for over three decades, has protected the Keys from overdevelopment and high rise condos and hotels.

Phil Shannon, Founder, said, "We all love the Keys' and with love comes responsibility and we are seeing people executing that responsibility by getting out the vote and standing by issues that are important to you."

Commissioner George Neugent praised the grassroots efforts of the group and noted that for as long as he has been a commissioner, he has supported this designation and will continue to do so.

"People choose to live here because it is a very special place. All you have to do is look at the beautiful views from Ocean Reef to Key West to understand why we want to protect it and why we don't want to see 19-story hotels built on our airports," said Neugent.

With regard to the FEMA issue, Neugent addressed a host of questions recognizing that the process has been broken and that he has been invigorated to go back and try to come up with better solutions.

Residents claim that they are being denied permits for small improvements on their home as a result of the Building Department working in collaboration with Property Appraisers Office. Local contractors have argued that this has adversely affected their financial well-being, as citizens are opting to simply forego improvements or hire unlicensed contractors.

"The first thing that I can work on, and hopefully get some support from the commission, is that when you try to apply for a permit, it doesn't automatically trigger a downstairs enclosure inspection," responded Neugent.

Sheena Collum, Executive Director, announced the launch of an updated website (www.CitizensNotSerfs.com), "As we move forward, we recognize that it's our responsibility to ensure that every individual throughout the 118 miles of the Florida Keys has a voice including our part-time supporters who are with us in spirit. With innovative technology, we now allow our members to view our meetings remotely and be apart of our concentrated efforts."

Citizens Not Serfs will be hosting its next meeting on Sunday, October 12th beginning at 3pm. This event is open to the public and the organization will be requesting attendance from Board of County Commission candidates.

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