Representative Goodman and members of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee:

Founded in 1880, the American Canoe Association (ACA) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization serving the broader paddling public by providing education related to all aspects of paddling; stewardship support to help protect paddling environments; and sanctioning of programs and events to promote paddlesport competition and recreation. The ACA has over 20,000 members, and 300 paddling clubs and affiliated organizations. The ACA sponsors over 1,400 events each year, including 200 races. The ACA education program has an estimated outreach of 800,000 people a year. With over 4,863 ACA members in Florida over the last couple years, the paddlesports community within the State represents an active group of citizens recreating on and appreciating Florida’s public waters.

While ACA representatives cannot physically be at today’s hearing, we are writing to strongly oppose Florida’s proposed HB 1103 under review this afternoon. Redefining the present “Ordinary High Water Line” would result in huge transfers of publicly owned land along the State’s rivers, lakes and streams into private ownership, amounting to the loss of thousands of acres of land that now belong to the people of Florida. Representing the interest of Florida paddlers and those that visit Florida to explore this beautiful and public resource, the ACA strongly opposes redefining the ordinary high water mark for navigable, non-tidal bodies, and the privatization of these public lands. The ACA encourages that you take into account the value of these public lands for outdoor recreation enthusiasts, sportsman, and conservationists within the state of Florida. The privatization of these lands and waters would be a great loss for Florida’s natural and scenic resources.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact our Stewardship Coordinator at the ACA National Office, 540.907.4460.

Sincerely,

Wade Blackwood, Executive Director