



November 16, 2015

Governor Rick Scott and the FFWCC,

The Walton County Artificial Reef Association has a deep interest in building a healthy and sustainable fishery off our Coast. Our reefs are designed to provide habitat for our native fish as well as recreational opportunities for our residents and tourists.

We have become aware of the fact that one lionfish can eat up to 65 of our native fish in a single feeding. We have great concern that the lionfish could destroy the biodiversity on our reefs. Another serious concern we have is that the venomous lionfish could sting our residents and/or tourists ruining what was designed to be a fun and educational snorkeling experience. This could cause our County economic harm.

As you are most assuredly aware, the lionfish invaded our region 5 years ago. We have not seen any consistent effort by the FWC to aggressively remove lionfish from the gulf coast and now, the problem has begun to explode to the point that we believe it's too big for your agency to deal with alone.

We have reviewed the Emerald Coast Reef Association's Lionfish Population Control Plan and believe that this is the best hope we have of keeping the lionfish population from destroying our valuable reef system.

The FWC Commission's support of ECRA's pilot program would be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "AMcAlexander", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andy McAlexander
President, SWARA
South Walton Artificial Reef Association
www.waltonreefs.org
850.259.8283

South Walton Artificial Reef Association

P.O. Box 2482, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459 email: info@waltonreefs.org