

Dear Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ ,

I'm writing to you regarding the proposed abolishment of the Isolated Finds Policy. I believe it to be a conceptually sound public policy, which has added over 9,450 artifacts to Florida's archaeological record and led to significant additions to the state's Master Site File. It offers archaeologists the opportunity to employ the data in their research efforts; and it nurtures the public's interest and participation in Florida history and the social sciences.

The authors of the Isolated Finds Policy recognized that cultural objects located in detached sediments of the river systems are displaced from their original context and have unreliable stratigraphy. Regulated recovery, preservation and recording of these objects is in essence a positive method of promoting the public's educational interest in archaeology , and as the Isolated Finds Policy states, a valuable scientific data gathering process.

Our professional critics continue to wrongfully group us with looters who illegally dig or collect artifacts at protected archaeological sites. There is a distinct difference between responsible avocational and amateur archaeologists who share information with professionals and the individuals who engage in illicit digging and never share any data. If the Commission arbitrarily stereotypes us, and the IFP is abolished, then responsible individuals will be alienated and no information will be shared at all.

Very stringent laws currently exist relevant to illegal digging or surface collecting on state lands. Despite those laws, some state officials are frustrated by what they claim is a lack of effective enforcement. Their frustration has manifested into a misplaced discriminatory bias that has wrongfully spilled over onto the Isolated Finds Policy. In essence abolishment would only result in punishing the very individuals who have complied with the policy.

I recommend that the state consider codifying the policy rather than abolish it. A working group consisting of IFP stakeholders should be formed to research and develop the necessary improvements. In the meantime, the IFP should remain in place, and continue to serve its intended public purpose.

Sincerely,

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NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

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CITY, STATE, ZIP

\_\_\_\_\_  
DAYTIME PHONE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

cc: Dr. Ryan Wheeler , BAR