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Water is Water. Just ask the Astronauts.

On March 27, Ron Saff published a letter referring to highly treated wastewater as “poopy water.” On behalf of the WateReuse Florida Association, I would like to correct some inaccurate statements on the important topic of indirect potable reuse.

Floridians are not and will not be drinking “poopy water” under the proposed legislation. Floridians pay dearly to treat wastewater. Today, treated wastewater is used to recharge wetlands, which eventually reaches our aquifer and surface waters—water that is used for our potable supply. Injected into the aquifer or discharged into a surface water body, it blends with billions and billions of gallons of water. When source water is extracted from the aquifer or a surface water body, it goes through another extensive treatment process—one in which water quality is continuously tested to ensure that before it leaves the plant, it meets all regulatory standards. Every year, every utility in Florida produces a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) to tell customers if there was any variation from the high-quality product they deliver.

Treated wastewater is being recycled directly into the drinking water system all over the world and in the United States. Even astronauts drink recycled water! California, Texas, and Arizona have regulatory requirements to allow for the use of treated wastewater as a source of water to create potable drinking water, including skipping the re-injection into the environment. They do this because water is water and once it’s been treated and retreated it is more than safe, it’s smart use of a limited and valuable resource.

Florida has always been a leader in water resource management. Whether we call it reuse, reclaimed, or recycled there is one thing it is not—poopy. Water should be judged by its quality, not its history. For those interested in learning the facts, the science and the technology of potable reuse, please visit our website www.WateReuseFL.com and participate in the discussion about the smartest way to use our blue gold—our water.

Randy Brown is the President of WateReuse Florida. He is the Director of Pompano Beach Utility—winner of the 2017 Resilient Utility of the Year and Resilient Project of the Year.