

TRIUMPH GULF COAST CRAWFORDVILLE MEETING June 20, 2019

Statement by Jack Rudloe

1. I want to thank our new representative Jason Schoaf for his assistance in helping me understand how the TRIUMPH GULF COAST process works. I will miss his presence on the Triumph board, because he has taken time, visited our aquarium, talked to our volunteers and given us good advice.
2. Jason's advice is that if we want to get funding, we must first partner with a governmental agency or public institution. Otherwise, without a partner, and being part of a governmental agency, we will never receive funding from Triumph.
3. With the claw back provisions, that's not likely. Our Wakulla County Commissioners have stated that they will never be on the hook for five million dollars for a non-governmental entity. As a taxpayer I can sympathize. But that provision alone sounds the death knoll for anyone or any organization that remains independent.
4. In other words, to receive funding from Triumph, you have to be "of the government, for the government and by the government." That's sad. What happened to initiative, to the spirit of entrepreneurship, with individuals who have made great technological creations working in their garages at night?
5. I have seen the correspondence between Triumph and the Legislature asking whether there were any prohibitions against businesses and nonprofits, and I recall that the board was told no there weren't. So I assumed it was a level playing field and continued with the time consuming, costly application process.
6. I am proud of the fact that Gulf Specimen Marine Lab and Aquarium is now 56 years old. We have built our organization out of nothing, with little funding from anyone, but we need funds to advance, and to meet

the goals that Triumph espouses. I am proud of the fact that 250 regional schools come to our facility on field trips, that we've helped developed new anti-cancer and anti-Alzheimer drugs, and that we have become embedded in the scientific and educational institutions.

Triumph staff has before that Gulf Specimen lacks a public purposes, and funding it would only benefit the Rudloe family. If the thousands of children visiting our laboratory, our sea turtle conservation programs, and the work we do in environmental education isn't a public purpose, what is?

7. We saw this is a way to help our impoverished community of Panacea, and Wakulla County. This would provide funding that would help boost the local economy, transfer technology and raise the educational levels of our oil impacted communities. Hence we applied, submitted our pre-proposal, and were encouraged by Triumph to proceed with the full application.

We worked day and night on the proposal, putting in all our resources to answer the questions. We amassed letters of support from numerous institutions, from individuals who attributed the jobs they received because they interned at Gulf Specimen. We gathered the reviews; it was heartwarming to see how many people loved their visits to our aquarium with our touch tanks and exhibits.

All along Triumph encouraged us. We were told by their staff that our proposal was of interest to them through discussions with Dr. Rick Harper, Jason Schoaf, Dr. Frank Fuller and others. This encouragement was a misrepresentation. We made it clear from the beginning that we are a standalone operation and not associated with any University. To be told at the end of the process that we do not qualify because of this lack of association is an appalling misrepresentation. If Triumph had been honest with us and said that was the case from the beginning, we would not have wasted our time and resources.

This false encouragement of asking us, and others, to submit a full proposal, makes it appear that Triumph was collecting applications simply to provide cover for their organization. While it appears that it was a fair and equitable process, that they were selecting proposals from a pool, they were in reality simply using our proposals to pad the pool so they could select their favorite organizations.

I am appearing here today, because I don't want to see other independent nonprofits, businesses or individuals waste their time and money jumping through hoops going through Triumph's process. In all fairness, you should have a flashing banner on your website saying, "WARNING; PRIVATE NON PROFIT, STAND ALONE ORGANIZATIONS, NO MATTER HOW GOOD THEY ARE, OR WHAT THEY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED, NEED NOT APPLY."

Better still, rethink your mission, and comply with the original guidelines that open the process to such organizations.

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