

November 13, 2019

VIA EMAIL: DBARTLETT@SFWMD.GOV

Drew Bartlett
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 3340

Dear Mr. Bartlett,

We, the undersigned, are committed to restoring and protecting Florida's water resources. We are strong supporters of Everglades restoration including the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), Restoration Strategies, the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Plans, the dispersed water management program, and the Central Everglades Planning Project.

Part of CERP, the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project, is a joint effort of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District. The project will achieve the CERP goal of 80 percent reduction in discharge events from Lake Okeechobee to the coastal estuaries, when combined with the Central Everglades Planning Project.

We urge the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District to approve the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project so it can be included in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020. Federal authorization in WRDA 2020 will allow Florida to receive cost share credit for their investments in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project components that can be expeditiously built on existing District lands.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Implementation of Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project will result in significant additional reductions in the harmful freshwater discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the coastal estuaries.

Signed,

Associated Industries of Florida
Lake Worth Drainage District
Southeast Florida Utility Council
The Nature Conservancy
Florida Section of American Water Works Water Utility Council
Florida Agriculture Coalition
Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Land Council

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Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association
Florida H2O Coalition
Southeast Milk, Inc.
Florida Agribusiness Council
Economic Council of Okeechobee, Inc., Jeffrey Sumner, Chairman
Henry Dean, Former Executive Director of South Florida Water Management District
Jon Steverson, Former Department of Environmental Protection Secretary
Ryan Matthews, Former Department of Environmental Protection Interim Secretary
Greg Munson, Former Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Secretary

cc: Noah Valenstein, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Chauncey Goss, Board Chairman, South Florida Water Management District
Scott Wagner, Vice Chairman, South Florida Water Management District
Carlos E. Martinez, Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District
Cheryl Meads, Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District
Charlette Roman, Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District
Jay Steinle, Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District
Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch, Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District
Ron Bergeron, Sr., Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District
Benjamin Butler, Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District