



County Administration

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Official Electronic Letterhead

July 17, 2020

Via Email: 2020LORSHABEAComments@usace.army.mil

Angela E. Dunn
Chief, Environmental Branch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, Florida 32207-8175

Dear Ms. Dunn,

**Subject: 2020 Planned Deviation to the Water Control Plan for
Lake Okeechobee and Everglades Agricultural Area
(LORS2008)**

Lake Okeechobee is a critical component in achieving environmental restoration, water supply, navigation, agriculture, tourism and recreation objectives in South Florida. It is essential and interconnected to communities, businesses, public water supplies, and ecosystems. As such, Palm Beach County (County) residents, taxpayers, and visitors depend on healthy and predictable lake levels to sustain a robust and diverse economy. A deviation to Lake Okeechobee operations has the potential to significantly affect the environment, water resources and economy of the County; therefore, any proposed deviation needs to be coordinated with affected stakeholders and carefully considered.

A 30-day review and comment period for a Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) and Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a resource as important as Lake Okeechobee is wholly inadequate. Further, there have been no public meetings, no opportunities for stakeholder participation and no formal or informal engagement or coordination with County stakeholders associated with Lake Okeechobee deviations initiated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the more than 9 months between the comment deadline for the 2019 Planned Deviation (September 20, 2019) and the Notice of Availability for the 2020 Planned Deviation (July 1, 2020).

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners and the more than 1.4 million residents of Palm Beach County, I respectfully request that the 30-day comment period be extended to a minimum of 60 days. Additional time



Ms. Angela E. Dunn
July 17, 2020
Page 2 of 2

is needed to understand the complexities of the proposed 2020 Planned Deviation, review the information provided in the 2,295 pages of information associated with the Draft Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI, and any potential water supply problems, ecological consequences to the Lake Worth Lagoon, and impacts to the region's economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy McBryan" followed by a horizontal line.

Jeremy McBryan, PE, CFM
County Water Resources Manager

cc: Patrick Rutter, Assistant County Administrator