

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[ELIZABETH.HITTOS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:ELIZABETH.HITTOS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[JONATHAN.VECCHI@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JONATHAN.VECCHI@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Gus M. Bilirakis  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-12  
2227 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Bilirakis:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Gus M. Bilirakis

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Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

Florida H2O Coalition

South Florida Water Coalition

The Florida Chamber of Commerce

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Associated Industries of Florida

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Economic Council of Okeechobee

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Roland and Mary Ann Martin Marina

Florida Agriculture Coalition

Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association

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Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association

Florida Cattleman's Association

Florida Agribusiness Council

Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association

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Jon Stevenson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Elizabeth Hittos, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Gus M. Bilirakis

Mr. Jonathan Vecchi, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Gus M. Bilirakis

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:** [DAVE.KARVELAS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:DAVE.KARVELAS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Vern Buchanan  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-16  
2427 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Buchanan:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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The Honorable Vern Buchanan

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Jon Steverson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation  
Mr. Dave Karvelas, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Vern Buchanan

**Proposed Language:**

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April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[CLAY.PHILLIPS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:CLAY.PHILLIPS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[ELIZABETH.BROWN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:ELIZABETH.BROWN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Kathy Castor  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-14  
2052 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Castor:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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The Honorable Kathy Castor

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Clay Phillips, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Kathy Castor

Ms. Elizabeth Brown, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Kathy Castor

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:** [AUSTIN.DURRER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:AUSTIN.DURRER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Charlie Crist  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-13  
215 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Crist:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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The Honorable Charlie Crist

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Austin Durrer, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Charlie Crist

**Proposed Language:**

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**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[WENDY.ANDERSON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:WENDY.ANDERSON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[AIMEE.COLLINS-MANDEVILLE@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:AIMEE.COLLINS-MANDEVILLE@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Val Demings  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-10  
217 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Demings:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Wendy Anderson, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Val Demings

Ms. Aimee Collins-Mandeville, Legislative Director, United States House of  
Representatives, Congresswoman Val Demings

**Proposed Language:**

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[JOSHUA.LIPMAN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JOSHUA.LIPMAN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Ted Deutch  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-22  
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Dear Representative Deutch:

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In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.



The Honorable Ted Deutch

April 23, 2020

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With 1.8 billion dollars invested in the Lake's dike repairs, and Congress' direction in WRDA 2018 to expedite the new Lake schedule, the Corps is well positioned to fulfill the commitments in WRDA 2000 – not abandon them.

During our current global emergency, when so much uncertainty permeates our daily lives, it is imperative that our water supply be preserved for our communities' health and safety and our Nation's food security. We ask that Congress re-assert its prior direction to the Corps to protect our water supply with the clarifying language attached for your consideration. We thank you for your work every day in protecting Florida's water, especially during these trying times facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

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Roland and Mary Ann Martin Marina

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The Honorable Ted Deutch

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Jon Steverson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Joshua Rogin, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Ted Deutch

Mr. Joshua Lipman, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Ted Deutch

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[CESAR.GONZALEZ@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:CESAR.GONZALEZ@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[CHRIS.SWEET@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:CHRIS.SWEET@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-25  
404 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart

April 23, 2020

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Sincerely,

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City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

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Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Cesar Gonzalez, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart

Mr. Chris Sweet, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[MICHAEL.LOWRY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:MICHAEL.LOWRY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)  
[MATT.BLACKWELL@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:MATT.BLACKWELL@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Neal Dunn  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-2  
316 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Dunn:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Neal Dunn

April 23, 2020

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Sincerely,

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City of Clewiston

Glades County

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Okeechobee Utility Authority

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Michael Lowry, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Neal Dunn

Mr. Matt Blackwell, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Neal Dunn

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.



April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JOSHUA.COHEN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JOSHUA.COHEN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[BRADLEY.SOLYAN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:BRADLEY.SOLYAN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Lois Frankel  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-21  
2305 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Frankel:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Lois Frankel

April 23, 2020

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Joshua Cohen, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Lois Frankel

Mr. Bradley Solyan, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Lois Frankel

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JILLIAN.LANEWYANT@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JILLIAN.LANEWYANT@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[DEVIN.MURPHY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:DEVIN.MURPHY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Matt Gaetz  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-1  
1721 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Gaetz:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Matt Gaetz

April 23, 2020

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Jillian Lane Wyant, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Matt Gaetz

Mr. Devin Murphy, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Matt Gaetz

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[LALE.MORRISON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:LALE.MORRISON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[TOM.CARNES@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:TOM.CARNES@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Alcee Hastings  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-20  
2353 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Hastings:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Alcee Hastings

April 23, 2020

Page 2

With 1.8 billion dollars invested in the Lake's dike repairs, and Congress' direction in WRDA 2018 to expedite the new Lake schedule, the Corps is well positioned to fulfill the commitments in WRDA 2000 – not abandon them.

During our current global emergency, when so much uncertainty permeates our daily lives, it is imperative that our water supply be preserved for our communities' health and safety and our Nation's food security. We ask that Congress re-assert its prior direction to the Corps to protect our water supply with the clarifying language attached for your consideration. We thank you for your work every day in protecting Florida's water, especially during these trying times facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

Florida H2O Coalition

South Florida Water Coalition

The Florida Chamber of Commerce

Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

Associated Industries of Florida

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Anglers for Lake Okeechobee

Roland and Mary Ann Martin Marina

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Florida Cattleman's Association

Florida Agribusiness Council

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Turfgrass Producers of Florida

Southeast Milk, Inc.

Wedgworth Farms, Keith Wedgworth, President

Lykes Brothers



The Honorable Alcee Hastings

April 23, 2020

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Hundley Farms, Inc.

Frontier Produce, Inc.

A. Duda and Sons

U.S. Sugar

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Greg Munson, Former Assistant Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Lale Morrison, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Alcee Hastings

Mr. Tom Carnes, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Alcee Hastings

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:** [TOLA.THOMPSON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:TOLA.THOMPSON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Al Lawson  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-5  
1406 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Lawson:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Al Lawson

April 23, 2020

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Sincerely,

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City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

Florida H2O Coalition

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The Florida Chamber of Commerce

Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

Associated Industries of Florida

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The Honorable Al Lawson

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Tola Thompson, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Al Lawson

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JAMES.LANGENDERFER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JAMES.LANGENDERFER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[SARAH.MILLER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:SARAH.MILLER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Brian Mast  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-18  
2182 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Mast:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Brian Mast

April 23, 2020

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City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

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Okeechobee Utility Authority

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The Honorable Brian Mast

April 23, 2020

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Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. James Langenderfer, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Brian Mast

Ms. Sarah Miller, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Brian Mast

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[CARLOS.PAZ@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:CARLOS.PAZ@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[COURTNEY.FOGWELL@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:COURTNEY.FOGWELL@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Mucarsel-Powell  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-26  
114 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Mucarsel-Powell:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.



The Honorable Mucarsel-Powell

April 23, 2020

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Sincerely,

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City of Clewiston

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Okeechobee Utility Authority

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Carlos Paz, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Mucarsel-Powell

Ms. Courtney Fogwell, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Mucarsel-Powell

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[BRAD.HOWARD@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:BRAD.HOWARD@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[JOHN.LAUFER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JOHN.LAUFER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Stephanie Murphy  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-7  
1710 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Murphy:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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The Honorable Stephanie Murphy

April 23, 2020

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Brad Howard, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy

Mr. John Laufer, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[STUART.BURNS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:STUART.BURNS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[VALENTINA.VALENTA@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:VALENTINA.VALENTA@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Bill Posey  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-8  
2150 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Posey:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Bill Posey

April 23, 2020

Page 2

With 1.8 billion dollars invested in the Lake's dike repairs, and Congress' direction in WRDA 2018 to expedite the new Lake schedule, the Corps is well positioned to fulfill the commitments in WRDA 2000 – not abandon them.

During our current global emergency, when so much uncertainty permeates our daily lives, it is imperative that our water supply be preserved for our communities' health and safety and our Nation's food security. We ask that Congress re-assert its prior direction to the Corps to protect our water supply with the clarifying language attached for your consideration. We thank you for your work every day in protecting Florida's water, especially during these trying times facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

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The Honorable Bill Posey

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Jon Steverson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Stuart Burns, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Bill Posey

Ms. Valentina Valenta, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Bill Posey

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.



April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JESS.CARTER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JESS.CARTER@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[COREY.SCHRODT@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:COREY.SCHRODT@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Francis Rooney  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-19  
120 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Rooney:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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The Honorable Francis Rooney

April 23, 2020

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Sincerely,

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City of Clewiston

Glades County

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Lake Worth Drainage District

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The Honorable Francis Rooney

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation  
Ms. Jessica Carter, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Francis Rooney  
Mr. Corey Schrodt, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Francis Rooney

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JENIFER.BRADLEY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JENIFER.BRADLEY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[HANNAH.STRUB@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:HANNAH.STRUB@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable John Rutherford  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-4  
1711 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Rutherford:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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The Honorable John Rutherford

April 23, 2020

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City of Clewiston

Glades County

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Jennifer Bradley, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman John Rutherford

Ms. Hannah Strub, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman John Rutherford

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JESSICA.KILLIN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JESSICA.KILLIN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)  
[CARLA.MCGARVEY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:CARLA.MCGARVEY@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Donna Shalala  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-27  
1320 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Shalala:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Donna Shalala

April 23, 2020

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City of Clewiston

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Lake Worth Drainage District

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Okeechobee Utility Authority

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The Honorable Donna Shalala

April 23, 2020

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Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Jessica Killin, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Donna Shalala

Ms. Carla McGarvey, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Donna Shalala

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[CHRISTINE.BIRON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:CHRISTINE.BIRON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[NICOLE.MCLAREN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:NICOLE.MCLAREN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Darren Soto  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-9  
1507 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Soto:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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The Honorable Darren Soto

April 23, 2020

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Christine Biron, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Darren Soto

Ms. Nicole McLaren, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Darren Soto

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JAMIE.ROBINETTE@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JAMIE.ROBINETTE@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[GUS.ASHTON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:GUS.ASHTON@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Ross Spano  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-15  
224 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Spano:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Ross Spano

April 23, 2020

Page 2

With 1.8 billion dollars invested in the Lake's dike repairs, and Congress' direction in WRDA 2018 to expedite the new Lake schedule, the Corps is well positioned to fulfill the commitments in WRDA 2000 – not abandon them.

During our current global emergency, when so much uncertainty permeates our daily lives, it is imperative that our water supply be preserved for our communities' health and safety and our Nation's food security. We ask that Congress re-assert its prior direction to the Corps to protect our water supply with the clarifying language attached for your consideration. We thank you for your work every day in protecting Florida's water, especially during these trying times facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

Florida H2O Coalition

South Florida Water Coalition

The Florida Chamber of Commerce

Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

Associated Industries of Florida

Okeechobee Business Alliance

Economic Council of Okeechobee

Anglers for Lake Okeechobee

Roland and Mary Ann Martin Marina

Florida Agriculture Coalition

Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association

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Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association

Florida Cattleman's Association

Florida Agribusiness Council

Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association

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Wedgworth Farms, Keith Wedgworth, President

Lykes Brothers

The Honorable Ross Spano

April 23, 2020

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Martin County Farm Bureau, Reed Hartman, President

Okeechobee County Farm Bureau, Mickey Bandi, President

Greg Munson, Former Assistant Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Jon Steverson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Jamie Robinette, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Ross Spano

Mr. Gus Ashton, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Ross Spano

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:** [ALEX.BLAIR@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:ALEX.BLAIR@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Greg Steube  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-17  
521 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Steube:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.



The Honorable Greg Steube

April 23, 2020

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With 1.8 billion dollars invested in the Lake's dike repairs, and Congress' direction in WRDA 2018 to expedite the new Lake schedule, the Corps is well positioned to fulfill the commitments in WRDA 2000 – not abandon them.

During our current global emergency, when so much uncertainty permeates our daily lives, it is imperative that our water supply be preserved for our communities' health and safety and our Nation's food security. We ask that Congress re-assert its prior direction to the Corps to protect our water supply with the clarifying language attached for your consideration. We thank you for your work every day in protecting Florida's water, especially during these trying times facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

Florida H2O Coalition

South Florida Water Coalition

The Florida Chamber of Commerce

Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

Associated Industries of Florida

Okeechobee Business Alliance

Economic Council of Okeechobee

Anglers for Lake Okeechobee

Roland and Mary Ann Martin Marina

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Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association

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Florida Cattleman's Association

Florida Agribusiness Council

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Lykes Brothers

The Honorable Greg Steube

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Greg Munson, Former Assistant Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Jon Stevenson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Alex Blair, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Greg Steube

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:** [MICAH.KETCHEL@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:MICAH.KETCHEL@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Michael Waltz  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-6  
216 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Waltz:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Michael Waltz

April 23, 2020

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During our current global emergency, when so much uncertainty permeates our daily lives, it is imperative that our water supply be preserved for our communities' health and safety and our Nation's food security. We ask that Congress re-assert its prior direction to the Corps to protect our water supply with the clarifying language attached for your consideration. We thank you for your work every day in protecting Florida's water, especially during these trying times facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

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City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

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Okeechobee Utility Authority

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Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

Associated Industries of Florida

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Economic Council of Okeechobee

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The Honorable Michael Waltz

April 23, 2020

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Jon Stevenson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation  
Mr. Micah Ketchel, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Michael Waltz

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[TRACIE.POUGH@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:TRACIE.POUGH@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[LAUREN.WOLMAN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:LAUREN.WOLMAN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-23  
1114 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Wasserman Schultz:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz

April 23, 2020

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Sincerely,

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City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

Florida H2O Coalition

South Florida Water Coalition

The Florida Chamber of Commerce

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Associated Industries of Florida

Okeechobee Business Alliance

Economic Council of Okeechobee

Anglers for Lake Okeechobee

Roland and Mary Ann Martin Marina

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The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz

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Jon Stevenson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Tracie Pough, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Ms. Lauren Wolman, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.



April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JARYN.EMHOF@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JARYN.EMHOF@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[SCOTT.MACKENZIE@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:SCOTT.MACKENZIE@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Daniel Webster  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-11  
1210 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Webster:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

The Honorable Daniel Webster

April 23, 2020

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Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

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City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

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The Honorable Daniel Webster

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Jon Stevenson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Ms. Jaryn Emhof, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Daniel Webster

Mr. Scott Mackenzie, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Daniel Webster

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

April 23, 2020

**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[JEAN.ROSEME@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JEAN.ROSEME@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[GREGORY.WILLIS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:GREGORY.WILLIS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Frederica S. Wilson  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-24  
2445 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Wilson:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

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During our current global emergency, when so much uncertainty permeates our daily lives, it is imperative that our water supply be preserved for our communities' health and safety and our Nation's food security. We ask that Congress re-assert its prior direction to the Corps to protect our water supply with the clarifying language attached for your consideration. We thank you for your work every day in protecting Florida's water, especially during these trying times facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

City of West Palm Beach

City of Okeechobee

City of Clewiston

Glades County

Okeechobee County

Lake Worth Drainage District

Southeast Florida Utility Council

Okeechobee Utility Authority

Florida Section of the American Water Works Water Utility Council

Florida H2O Coalition

South Florida Water Coalition

The Florida Chamber of Commerce

Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

Associated Industries of Florida

Okeechobee Business Alliance

Economic Council of Okeechobee

Anglers for Lake Okeechobee

Roland and Mary Ann Martin Marina

Florida Agriculture Coalition

Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association

Florida Citrus Mutual

Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association

Florida Cattleman's Association

Florida Agribusiness Council

Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association

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Southeast Milk, Inc.

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King Ranch

Hundley Farms, Inc.

Frontier Produce, Inc.

A. Duda and Sons

U.S. Sugar

Florida Crystals Corporation

Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida

Florida Farm Bureau Federation

Palm Beach Soil and Water Conservation District

Broward County Farm Bureau, Fred Segal, President

Dade County Farm Bureau, Tom Rieder, President

Palm Beach County Farm Bureau, Glenn Whitworth, Jr., President

Western Palm Beach County Farm Bureau, Keith Wedgworth, President

Lee County Farm Bureau, Ricky Pritchett, President

St. Lucie County Farm Bureau, Courtney Forget, President

Indian River County Farm Bureau, Ashley Cox, President

Osceola County Farm Bureau, Herb Harbin, President

Highlands County Farm Bureau, Jeff Williams, President

Collier County Farm Bureau, Kevin Seitzinger, President

Hendry / Glades County Farm Bureau, Callie Walker, President

Martin County Farm Bureau, Reed Hartman, President

Okeechobee County Farm Bureau, Mickey Bandi, President

Greg Munson, Former Assistant Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Jon Stevenson, Former Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ryan Matthews, Former Interim Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Dean, Former Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

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cc: Florida Congressional Delegation

Mr. Jean Roseme, Chief of Staff, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson

Mr. Gregory Willis, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson

**Proposed Language:**

Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541 applies to the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule and the Secretary shall use the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule in place in December 2000 as the base condition for the analysis required under Section 601(h)(5) of Public Law 106-541.

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**VIA EMAIL ONLY:**

[LARRY.CALHOUN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:LARRY.CALHOUN@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

[JOSHUA.WOODWARD@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV](mailto:JOSHUA.WOODWARD@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV)

The Honorable Ted Yoho  
United States House of Representatives, District FL-3  
1730 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request to Protect Florida's Critical Water Supply from Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Representative Yoho:

We write to you during this unprecedented global emergency requesting your help in protecting Florida's critical water supply in Lake Okeechobee, because the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is failing to do so. The undersigned represent a diverse group of stakeholders, businesses, and communities that all rely on water from Lake Okeechobee for our businesses, for the well-being of our communities, and the enjoyment and restoration of our natural environment.

In 2000, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act ("WRDA 2000") authorizing an ecological restoration plan for America's Everglades ecosystem. Today, we know it as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP"). CERP directed the Corps and State of Florida, as the local sponsor, to restore our natural environment, *while* providing for our water-related needs, including water supply for people and businesses. CERP was historic. It passed after the State of Florida, the Corps, and diverse businesses, municipalities, farmers, and environmental groups spent nearly a decade developing it. Many of the undersigned were involved in the passage of CERP and all of us are committed to its success.

We recently learned though that the Corps is ignoring a critical feature of WRDA 2000, the Savings Clause<sup>1</sup>. The Savings Clause directs the Corps to protect the water supply that was in place in 2000, as it restores the environment. When Congress passed WRDA 2000, it included Lake Okeechobee as part of WRDA 2000. This was an essential element then, and it is just as important now.

Today, 20 years after Congress spoke, the Corps' position is that it will not protect the legal uses of water in place in 2000. Instead, it intends to permanently consign us to the diminished supply available when the Lake was lowered temporarily to repair the dike. The Corps claims that the Lake is not part of WRDA 2000 and, therefore, the water supply protections in the Savings Clause will not apply. This position is not supported by WRDA 2000 and betrays the promises the Corps made to us in 2000. The Corps seeks to unilaterally free itself of complying with WRDA 2000. If allowed to do so, Florida's existing and future water supply will be jeopardized at a time when we need assurances that sufficient water will be available for everyone.

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Congressman Ted Yoho

Mr. Joshua Woodward, Legislative Director, United States House of Representatives,  
Congressman Ted Yoho

**Proposed Language:**

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