

BRIAN J. MAST
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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0918

December 11, 2019

Drew Bartlett
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

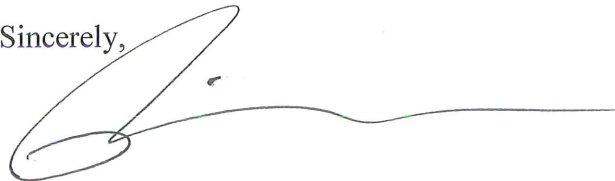
Dear Executive Director Bartlett:

I am writing to urge you and the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board to delay approval of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project.

While I am a strong supporter of additional storage capacity north of Lake Okeechobee, I am concerned that authorizing this project now could jeopardize timely completion of the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Storage Reservoir Project, which provides far greater benefits to reduce harmful discharges and restore the Everglades. Moreover, I have heard numerous objections from environmental experts that the current plan falls short of implementing substantial water quality improvements and advancing Everglades restoration.

I do not believe that we should rush forward with spending billions of dollars of taxpayer money on a plan that does not have support from Everglades restoration experts, especially when that plan would compete for funding against projects that do enjoy broad support. Therefore, it is my preference that the South Florida Water Management District and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers address these concerns before moving forward with authorization of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project.

Sincerely,



Brian Mast
Member of Congress

cc:
South Florida Water Management District Board Members
Col. Andrew Kelly, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers