

June 14, 2021

Colonel Andrew Kelly
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Dear Colonel Kelly:

As the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reevaluates and defines operations for the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule between now and July 2021, the undersigned national and state-based businesses and industries that rely on a healthy and restored Everglades urge you to adopt a more equitable operational plan that will send the maximum amount of water to the Everglades, Everglades National Park, and Florida Bay during the dry season – when it is most needed.

A restored Everglades is essential for the drinking water supply for more than 9 million Floridians, critical to the health of diverse ecosystems and the environmental benefits they provide, and directly supports the billions of dollars and thousands of jobs tied to outdoor recreation, tourism, and other sectors that define the Sunshine State's \$1 Trillion GDP, its economic competitiveness, and quality of life. Florida's economy runs on water and the Everglades economy that it drives sustains a \$85.9 billion tourism industry, including an \$11 billion fishing industry and \$23.3 billion recreational boating industry, and hundreds of thousands of jobs.

We urge your action to complete the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) that will increase flows to the Everglades during dry periods thus creating more capacity in the lake to safely capture water during the wet season. By doing this, it will decrease the likelihood of toxic discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries, provide dry season hydration to Everglades National Park, reducing the risk of wildfires, minimize recreational closures, protecting carbon stocks across this vast peatland, recharge the Biscayne aquifer which serves and the public water supply to millions, and even helping to mitigate hyper-salinity in Florida Bay. Just as south Florida's ecosystems are connected, so too are our businesses to Florida's waters.

Thank you for your efforts to develop an equitable operational plan for Lake Okeechobee. This water belongs to all Floridians and by optimizing freshwater flows during the dry season it will expedite restoration benefits, aid in conservation efforts on federal lands, and help the largest number of constituencies in the watershed.

Very Respectfully,

Abu Garcia - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Spirit Lake, IA

American Sportfishing Association (ASA)

Alexandria, VA

Berkley - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Spirit Lake, IA

CHUB - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Spirit Lake, IA

Cobia - Maverick Boat Group

Ft. Pierce, FL

Daiwa

Cypress, CA

DOA Lures

Stuart, FL

Engel Coolers

Jupiter, FL

Fenwick - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Spirit Lake, IA

Fin-Nor - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Philadelphia, PA

Flylords

Carbondale, CO

Greys - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Columbia, SC

Hardy - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Columbia, SC

Hell's Bay Boatworks

Titusville, FL

Hewes - Maverick Boat Group

Ft. Pierce, FL

Hodgman - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Columbia, SC

Johnson - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Spirit Lake, IA

Maverick Boat Group

Ft. Pierce, FL

Maverick - Maverick Boat Group

Ft. Pierce, FL

Mitchell - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Philadelphia, PA

National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA)

Washington, DC

NEMO Equipment

Dover, NH

O. Mustad & Sons Americas Inc.

Miami, FL

The Orvis Company

Manchester, VT

Pathfinder - Maverick Boat Group

Ft. Pierce, FL

PENN - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Philadelphia, PA

Pflueger - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Philadelphia, PA

Plano - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Sandwich, IL

Pure Fishing, Inc.

Columbia, SC

Scientific Angler

Midland, MI

SeaDek Marine Products

Rockledge, FL

Shakespeare - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Columbia, SC

Spiderwire - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Spirit Lake, IA

Stren - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Spirit Lake, IA

Ugly Stik - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Philadelphia, PA

Van Staal - Pure Fishing, Inc.

Orleans, MA

Yamaha Motor Corporation, USA

Kennesaw, GA

Yeti

Austin, TX