



RESTORING AMERICA'S EVERGLADES

March 31st, 2023

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy &
Water Development and Related Agencies
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy &
Water Development and Related Agencies
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy &
Water Development and Related Agencies
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy &
Water Development and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Feinstein, Ranking Member Kennedy, Chair Fleischmann, and Ranking Member Kaptur:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the sportfishing, boating, and greater outdoor industry, we write to demonstrate our support for \$725 million in funding for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration (SFER) line in your respective Fiscal Year 2024 Energy and Water Development bills. Recent bipartisan Congressional appropriations, combined with state funding, is driving momentum at a time of dire need for an ecosystem that provides a myriad of benefits to the environment and many facets of human life – including a significant impact on local, regional, and national industries and economies. As detailed below, continued bold funding for Everglades restoration is a prudent and impactful investment for taxpayers, our environment, and our economy.

Authorized in 2000, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is a 50/50 partnership between Washington and the State of Florida. As such, each federal dollar invested leverages at least a matching dollar by the state. This program is a national model for federal-state collaboration and good government as a fair and leveraged approach to spending of taxpayer resources. It is also important to note that keeping Everglades restoration on track with necessary funding will save billions in taxpayer dollars in the long run as opposed to the old approach of chronic underfunding and missed opportunities. Smart investment to restore America's Everglades will build the resiliency of our both our ecology and economy.

Over four million of the nation's 55 million anglers reside in or frequent Florida as do almost one million registered boat owners, with many of these focusing on the iconic fishing and boating opportunities in the southern part of the state where ongoing water quality impacts have highlighted the need to expedite Everglades restoration activities. In Florida, the Fishing Capital of the World, the sportfishing industry is a \$13.8 billion economic engine supporting almost 120,000 jobs, making clean waters and abundant fisheries of paramount importance to us not only in the state, but nationally. Florida's \$33 billion outdoor recreation economy, driven by fishing, boating, hunting, and other outdoor pursuits, has a robust impact on both jobs and GDP.

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A key tool in achieving these numerous benefits will be the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir - which recently celebrated a construction groundbreaking. We are eager to see this project expedited as a national priority and we trust USACE will continue to dedicate a significant amount of annual funding toward its construction. Once complete, the EAA Reservoir will reconnect Lake Okeechobee to the Central Everglades, Everglades National Park, and Florida Bay. It will be a critical tool to recharge the aquifer that provides drinking water for millions of Floridians and millions of tourists and reduce harmful discharges that too frequently devastate Florida's coastal estuaries. We support the highest levels of funding needed for this project, for Everglades restoration, and for the important work of the USACE Civil Works construction program.

Everglades restoration provides drinking water security for 9 million, serves as a massive carbon sink, builds ecological and community resilience, and very importantly it fortifies water-driven communities and economies. Beyond the impact on the outdoor recreation industry, Everglades restoration produces a 4:1 Return On Investment for Florida's clean-water driven economy. Thank you again for your investment to date and commitment to seeing through this one-of-a-kind effort to restore America's Everglades.

Sincerely,



Titusville, FL



Jupiter, FL



Columbia, SC



New Smyrna Beach, FL



Jupiter, FL



Austin, TX



Tampa, FL



Miami, FL



Woodland, WA



Sunderland, VT



Bozeman, MT



Portland, OR



Santa Ana, CA



Woodland, WA



Fort Pierce, FL



Racine, WI



Charleston, SC

CC:
Secretary Deb Haaland, United States Department of the Interior
The Honorable Shalanda Young, Director, White House Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Brenda Mallory, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
LTG Scott Spellmon, Chief of Engineers, United States Army Corps of Engineers
Mr. Edward Belk, Director of Civil Works, United States Army Corps of Engineers