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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–0919

February 3, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In your Inaugural Speech, you made clear that infrastructure is a priority of your Administration. We applaud your desire to work on this issue, and we invite you to look at the incredible work being done by the Everglades federal/state partnership, especially the work being done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). We are especially encouraged by your comments at the Collier County Fairgrounds on October 23, 2016 when you said, "A Trump Administration will work alongside you to protect and restore the beautiful Florida Everglades."

As you prepare your budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, we request that you strongly support Everglades restoration projects, especially those within the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP). Both the Corps and the Department of Interior (DOI) are charged with the critical task of restoring the Everglades and reinvigorating its ecosystems. Your attention to these issues is appreciated and we look forward to working with your Administration on them.

The Everglades ecosystem spans across 16 counties and 164 cities in Florida. It has a $2 trillion economic impact and 55% of the real estate value in the state of Florida is tied to it. During South Florida's annual wet season, roughly 60 inches of rainfall provides for ample water that replenishes the aquifers which provide drinking water to 8.1 million people in South Florida. This unique ecosystem exerts a dominant influence over Florida's hydrologic cycle and seasonal weather patterns.

However, the system is now less than half of its original size and human impacts have degraded the quality of the water. More than that, Lake Okeechobee now fills up six times faster than it can be drained resulting in massive discharges into the surrounding watershed. Extremes in water levels being too high or too low in the Lake produce very different consequences. Too high and untreated discharges escape to the coasts and wreak havoc on saline environments; too low and salt water encroaches on brackish ecosystems, killing flora and fauna. Balance must be restored to this complex and delicate region.

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Most recently, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016 authorized two CERP projects that now await further action by the Corps and DOI. These include the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) as well as additional authorizations to complete the Picayune Strand project. These projects are an important step in achieving more optimal water flow and we encourage immediate funding for these projects. The CERP is a multi-year and multi-phase project that competes for funding from Corps projects across the country. The Everglades deserve your attention and support and we ask that you provide the necessary resources to restore the region.

The restoration of the Everglades has far ranging impacts to the entire State of Florida and the rest of the country. We look forward to working with you on these important infrastructure projects.

Sincerely,

Francis Rooney
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress

Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
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Bill Posey
Member of Congress

Thomas J. Rooney
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Carlos Curbelo
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Theodore E. Deutch
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Daniel Webster
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Al Lawson, Jr.
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Kathy Castor
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Dr. Neal Dunn
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Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress