

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKER
AND FAMILY SUPPORT

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

VICE CHAIR,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR
AND LAND FORCES



CONGRESSWOMAN STEPHANIE MURPHY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FLORIDA'S SEVENTH DISTRICT

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1710 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4035

ORLANDO OFFICE
225 E ROBINSON ST, SUITE 525
ORLANDO, FL 32801
(888) 205-5421

SANFORD OFFICE
110 W FIRST ST, SUITE 210
SANFORD, FL 32771
(888) 205-5421

June 15, 2021

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Regan,

I write regarding recent reports that describe significant ecological damage to a navigable waterway in my Central Florida district called the Little Wekiva River.¹ The Little Wekiva River used to be over four-feet deep and was frequented by individuals on kayaks, canoes, and small motor craft. Recently, the river has been rapidly overwhelmed by silt and debris, resulting in some areas becoming completely dry. As the river fills with sediment, water is being diverted in multiple directions, pushing sediment into adjacent wetlands, creating flood risks and destroying habitats. In light of the foregoing, I respectfully request that the Environmental Protection Agency investigate the surrounding area for potential Clean Water Act violations.

Many local advocates believe that construction on a major, federally-supported highway project less than 100 yards from the Little Wekiva River could be the main source of severe sedimentation discharge into the river. The Clean Water Act and its implementing regulations require that operators of certain construction sites obtain coverage for their stormwater discharges under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit; develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan or a Stormwater Management Plan; and put measures in place to prevent discharges of pollutants in stormwater runoff. However, the permits for this project indicate that several of the multi-acre highway construction sites are connected through underground pipes that discharge into the Little Wekiva River.² Following various reports of discharge in fact flowing into the river, local authorities and residents have submitted various complaints to the permitting agencies. Although inspections have taken place, I believe the extent of the ecological damage warrants an investigation by the EPA.

¹ See, e.g., Holly Bristow, "Portions of the Little Wekiva River are dry, buried in silt and debris," *FOX 35 Orlando* (Feb. 12, 2021), available [here](#); Kevin Spear, "Massive invasion of sand burying Little Wekiva River leads residents to suspect I-4 construction," *Orlando Sentinel* (Feb. 12, 2021), available [here](#).

² See, e.g., St. Johns River Water Management District Permitting for the I4 Ultimate Project <https://permitting.sjrwmd.com/ep/#/prmtInfo?curId=&hdr=1&usrId=0&offclId=22434&seqNo=3>

Sections 309 and 404 of the Clean Water Act authorize the EPA to enforce violations of the Clean Water Act, including to investigate whether a violation has occurred; to issue administrative compliance orders requiring a violator to stop any ongoing illegal discharge activity; and, where appropriate, to remove the illegal discharge and otherwise restore the site. I respectfully request that the EPA expeditiously begin this process to determine whether such violations have taken place, to the detriment of the Little Wekiva River.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress