



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

June 25, 2021

Mr. Jaime A. Pinkham
Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Subject: Expedite Authorization of Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Storage and Conveyance Projects (Letter pursuant to Senate Bill 94, passed into State law in 2021)

Dear Secretary Pinkham:

Highlighted by the current Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual process, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) storage and conveyance is critically important to managing water in South Florida for people and the environment. The State of Florida is dedicated to funding and constructing CERP features for the betterment of South Florida's 8.7 million residents. To maintain progress on CERP implementation, our citizens depend on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to advance the administrative aspects of the CERP.

As an example, the USACE is only able to advance federal construction efforts if the State of Florida remains ahead of the federal government in CERP expenditures. However, State expenditures are only recognized as credit in our cost-share agreement after the USACE secures Congressional authorization for a CERP project.

The State, under Governor DeSantis' leadership, is expediting construction of CERP and has committed more than \$915 million in funding for CERP projects since 2019. These funds are advancing projects and represent the state's interest in the expeditious implementation of CERP.

To match the State's urgency with building out CERP, we urge the USACE to submit the Project Implementation Reports for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP) and the Western Everglades Restoration Project (WERP) to Congress in time for authorization in the Water Resources Development Act of 2022. The Florida Legislature has already appropriated \$150 million for LOWRP implementation, and the South Florida Water Management District is positioned to begin implementation of WERP when a Tentatively Selected Plan is approved.

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We are committed to expediting Everglades restoration, and we appreciate your commitment to advancing CERP components for authorization and construction. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can assist in advancing LOWRP and WERP for authorization.

Thank you,



Drew Bartlett
Executive Director

DB/mj

C: Lt. General Scott Spellmon
MG William Graham
BG Jason Kelly
COL Andrew Kelly