June 17, 2020

Re: Support for Advancement of C&SF Project Update Study

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The South Florida Regional Planning Council, representing Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties, would like to express its strong support for undertaking a Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project Update Study (“Resiliency Study” or “Restudy”) and provision of funding for the Restudy in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fiscal Year 2021 Work Plan. This restudy is needed to assess the full extent of South Florida’s aging water management infrastructure and integrate the potential impacts of sea level rise and generally higher water tables into the engineering and design of improved flood control features.

As the Mayors of Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties noted in their June 4, 2020 letter (enclosed herewith), moving forward with the reevaluation of the C&SF Project given existing and future challenges such as sea level rise, increased flooding events, extreme weather, a growing population, and the threat to the economy if these challenges are not addressed, is of utmost importance. We are delighted that the South Florida Water Management District has agreed to serve as a local sponsor for the Resiliency Study, and with the advancement of the Section 216 Initial Appraisal Report by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE”).
We are pleased to add our support to this important request and thank you in advance for doing everything you can to secure funding for this critically needed study. It is difficult to overstate the importance and necessity of funding the Project Resiliency Study in the USACE’s Fiscal Year 2021 Work Plan. Addressing South Florida’s flood risk and ensuring improved flood control features and service throughout the region well into the future is essential to South Florida’s resiliency, economic recovery and growth, and quality of life. Tens of billions of dollars in infrastructure decisions by the public and private sectors depend on the C&SF Project continuing to function as well or better than it has for the last seven decades.

Thank you for your continued leadership on this issue. Please contact me and our Executive Director Isabel Cosio Carballo if we can provide you with additional information, support, or otherwise be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Daniella Levine Cava
Chair, South Florida Regional Planning Council

Enclosures

cc: Mr. R.D. James
Assistant Secretary of the Army-Civil Works
Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite
Chief of Engineers / Commanding General
Headquarters
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
331 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Maj. Gen. Diana M. Holland
Commander
South Atlantic Division
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60 Forsyth Street SW, Room 10M15
Atlanta, GA 30303-8801

Col. Andrew Kelly
District Commander
Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32207-8175

Mr. Chauncey Goss
Chairman of the Governing Board
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Mr. Drew Bartlett
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406
June 4, 2020

Senator Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Senator Rick Scott
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Greg Steube
521 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz
1114 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Brian Mast
2182 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Representative Frederica Wilson
2445 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Francis Rooney
120 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20002
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart
404 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Alcee L. Hastings
2353 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
114 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Lois Frankel
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Representative Donna Shalala
1320 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Ted Deutch
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Urgent Advancement of the Central and South Florida Project Update Study

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We write to express our counties’ continued, unified support for a Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project (“C&SF Project” or “Project”) Update Study (“Resiliency Study” or “ResStudy”) to address immediate priorities and a more extensive, longer-term reevaluation of the C&SF Project. We urgently seek your assistance to ensure funding of this Study in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Work Plan, and we also wish to commend two recent developments that mark significant milestones towards these goals. As mayors of the four counties of Southeast Florida, we are actively investing in flood risk mitigation and planning for sea level rise, but these investments rely upon concurrent improvements to the C&SF Project.

Importantly, the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) recently agreed to be the local sponsor of the C&SF Resiliency Study at its March 12 meeting. The USACE and SFWMD are already long-term partners in the operation of the C&SF Project, but this additional affirmation is critical.
We are also extremely pleased to note the recent advancement of the Section 216 Initial Appraisal Report by USACE. It identifies many of the existing and future challenges facing the system, including population growth, land development, extreme weather, and sea level rise. It correctly concludes that these challenges require a reevaluation of the C&SF Project, in addition to long-term improvements. An appendix to the Report highlights many of the resilience strategies and flood reduction projects already being advanced by our four counties.

The importance of the C&SF Project to our region cannot be overstated; as evidenced by recent flood events and recurring drought, its function is fundamental to South Florida’s environment and economy. Our region relies extensively upon the C&SF Project for flood protection for six million people, the preservation of water supplies, and ecological value, but the Project is nearly 70 years old. Physical conditions have changed, including a markedly-altered landscape, the booming economics of dense urban areas, and evolving hydrologic conditions (especially increased rainfall intensity and rising seas) that strain the existing system’s ability to move and discharge stormwater. Moreover, climate projections indicate that conditions will change even more significantly over the coming decades, further increasing the stress on the Project and its ability to function adequately.

We stand ready to support USACE and SFWMD as they work towards initiation and completion of the Study. Please stand with us and support appropriate funding for the Restudy in the Fiscal Year 2021 Corps of Engineers Work Plan to begin this critical effort. Please contact us if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Dave Kerner  
Mayor, Palm Beach County

Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor, Miami-Dade County

Dale V.C. Holness  
Mayor, Broward County

Heather Carruthers  
Mayor, Monroe County

CC:  
Mr. R.D. James  
Assistant Secretary of the Army–Civil Works  
Department of the Army  
108 Army Pentagon  
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Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite
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Daniella Levine Cava, (Chair), Commissioner, Miami-Dade County

Steve Geller (First Vice Chair), Commissioner, Broward County

Mario J. Bailey, (Second Vice Chair), Governor’s Appointee Miami-Dade County

Samuel Kaufman, (Treasurer), Commissioner, Key West

Beam Furr, (Secretary), Commissioner, Broward County

Greg Ross (Immediate Past Chair), Mayor, Cooper City

Patricia T. Asseff, Governor’s Appointee Broward County

M. Margaret Bates, Commissioner, Lauderhill

Michelle Coldiron, Commissioner, Monroe County

Joseph Corradino, Mayor, Village of Pinecrest

Jose “Pepe” Diaz, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County

Cary Goldberg, Governor’s Appointee Broward County

Jorden Leonard, Council Member, Bay Harbor Islands

Jean Monestime, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County

David Rice, Commissioner, Monroe County

Michael Udine, Commissioner, Broward County

Sandra Walters, Governor’s Appointee Monroe County

Isabel Cosio Carballo, Executive Director

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Ex Officio Members

Jason Andreotta, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Laura Corry, South Florida Water Management District

Dat Huynh, Florida Department of Transportation, District Six