



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

June 4, 2019

Colonel Andrew Kelly
District Commander – Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Subject: Expedited CERP Implementation of the Central Everglades Project and Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project

Dear Colonel Kelly:

Water and natural resources are the foundation of Florida's economy and way of life. Immediate action is necessary to protect and restore these resources and our natural environment. Re-occurring Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases have resulted in an increasing threat to our fragile ecosystems including our rivers, northern estuaries and wildlife. Recent releases have caused significant economic loss to the State of Florida as well as closures to our recreational areas.

Recognizing the threat that harmful regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee continue to pose to Florida's environment, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 19-12 on "Achieving More Now For Florida's Environment" directing the South Florida Water Management District (District) to expeditiously construct critical components in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). While the District finishes the C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area and begins constructing the C-43 Reservoir, we are also expediting the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir Project.

In order to maintain the District's eligibility for cost share consistent with the CERP Master Agreement executed August 13, 2009, there is an immediate need to advance the execution of Pre-Partnership Credit Agreements (PPCAs) for the Stormwater Treatment Area construction associated with the EAA Reservoir. Due to our expedited schedule, the PPCA for this feature is needed by October 1, 2019.

Furthermore, the District is applying for permits associated with the EAA Reservoir Stormwater Treatment Area and urges the Corps to make them a top priority, so construction is not delayed. The first such application was submitted today, June 4th, to begin site preparation for the northern feeder canal and staging area. The District's stepwise approach, periodically submitting permit applications as they are ready, will allow each construction phase to begin as soon as possible.

Colonel Kelly
June 4, 2019
Page 2

The District has routinely demonstrated a commitment in fulfilling our role as the local sponsor for the CERP. Expediting the construction of these crucial projects that will benefit Lake Okeechobee and the northern Estuaries is just one example of our commitment to restoring America's Everglades. Your prompt attention to expediting the execution of the PPCAs and issuance of permits for these much-needed restoration projects is appreciated. I will stay in close communication with you as we usher these critical projects into the construction phase.

Sincerely,



Drew Bartlett
Executive Director