



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES  
COMMISSIONER WILTON SIMPSON  
THE CAPITOL

May 8, 2024

South Florida Water Management District  
3301 Gun Club Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Dear Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District,

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) appreciates the opportunity to express its support for the Lower Kissimmee Basin Stormwater Treatment Area (LKBSTA) project.

Within the Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) area, 2,356 producers implement Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) over 1.5 million acres. BMPs are practical, cost-effective actions that agricultural landowners can take to conserve water and reduce the amount of nutrients (fertilizers and animal waste) and other pollutants entering water resources. BMPs are designed to balance water resource needs with agricultural production.

These BMPs, in combination with regional water treatment projects like the LKBSTA, are critical to the restoration and sustainability of waters throughout Florida, including Lake Okeechobee and all the connected water bodies. Such projects benefit the communities and wildlife that depend on this precious ecosystem.

The LKBSTA is designed for bulk removal of phosphorous, pulling mass amounts from the system to reduce harmful algae blooms in Lake Okeechobee. The expectation of the project is to restore the health of the ecosystem and make a lasting difference in water quality of Lake Okeechobee and across the broader region. Implementation of the LKBSTA is projected to allow the lake to better provide flood protection, drinking water, agricultural irrigation, and recreational activities for the surrounding communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support. We look forward to continued progress on restoration projects and to working with our state and federal partners to improve water quality.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to be "Wilton Simpson", is written over a horizontal line.

Wilton Simpson  
Commissioner of Agriculture