

May 9, 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,

As a coalition of environmental leaders, we have a vested interest in protecting Florida's precious natural resources. Our organization and our allies advocate in the best interest of the wildlife that thrives in the Everglades, fighting for its restoration and protection.

The Lower Kissimmee Basin Stormwater Treatment Area (LKBSTA) is critical to the restoration and sustainability of Lake Okeechobee and the wildlife and endangered species that rely on this critical ecosystem. The undersigned organizations urge the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to advance this project for the benefit of our precious Everglades.

The LKBSTA is one effective solution to restore the health of Lake Okeechobee. Currently, water with excessive levels of phosphorus enters the lake from the Kissimmee River and other northern canals. As these levels rise, phosphorus accumulates in Lake Okeechobee, contributing to harmful algal blooms that not only plague the lake but also downstream waterways and coastal areas. These algal blooms can be toxic not only to the wildlife that depend on these waterways, but also to people.

The Basin Management Action Plan from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection identifies the LKBSTA project as one that can improve the health of Lake Okeechobee and address detrimental phosphorus levels. The combination of high nutrient levels and available water make this location the most effective and efficient possible site in the entire Okeechobee watershed for phosphorus clean-up. By slowing down and removing excess nutrients from the water, LKBSTA will substantially improve the health of Lake Okeechobee. As a result, wildlife, our communities, and the greater Everglades ecosystem will stand to benefit.

By implementing this project, and doing so promptly, we can make a lasting change in the long-term trajectory of these waterways. As such, the below organizations stand in strong support of this project and urge SFWMD to advance the LKBSTA.

Thank you for your consideration,



Anna Upton  
Chief Executive Officer  
Everglades Trust



Michele Arquette-Palermo  
Water Policy Manager  
Conservancy of Southwest Florida



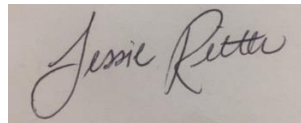
Kelly Cox  
Director of Everglades Policy  
Audubon Florida



Bradley Watson  
Vice President of Policy  
Everglades Foundation



Matt DePaolis  
Environmental Policy Director  
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation



Jessie Ritter  
Associate Vice President, Water and  
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Cara Capp  
Senior Everglades Program Manager  
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Kellie Ralston  
Vice President for Conservation and  
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Bonefish & Tarpon Trust

CC: Drew Bartlett, Executive Director, SFWMD