



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

GET THE FACTS

March 2016

Commentators continue to falsely claim that private interests influenced a water management decision to back pump water into Lake Okeechobee during extreme January rainfall, ignoring the fact that SFWMD flood control operations were carried out to protect families and properties surrounding Lake Okeechobee.

Water management decisions during extreme rainfall events, like those in January, require balance and difficult decisions – but protecting lives and families is an easy decision. Flood protection is why the South Florida Water Management District was created in 1949 and continues carrying out this critical mission today.

Here are the facts:

- Practices of the past – which included back pumping water into Lake Okeechobee to assure water supply during dry times – were eliminated by the SFWMD Governing Board nearly a decade ago.
- An appropriate State permit was put in place by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with specific guidelines restricting operation of these pumps for extreme flood conditions only, as occurred this January.
- Back pumping is limited by a DEP permit, not by federal litigation.
- SFWMD works collaboratively with other public entities to communicate water management issues to the public. Misinformation and agenda-driven campaigns do nothing to inform or educate South Florida's citizens on the complexities of the regional flood control system.

#

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. Our mission is to protect South Florida's water resources by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.