

January 18, 2018

Governor Rick Scott  
Executive Office of the Governor  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott,

We have serious concerns about the recent news reports indicating there is a small but vocal group of activists threatening to derail the progress being made on the Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir, which will help the discharges impacting the coastal estuaries and continue Everglades restoration without needlessly harming our Glades communities. We urge you to see these concerns for what they really are: a land grab attempt by a group of activists who have repeatedly shown nothing but disdain for our rural farming communities south of Lake Okeechobee.

Last legislative session, the Everglades Foundation and its affiliated groups pushed a 60,000-acre land grab on the Florida Legislature and ignored the true economic devastation it would have on our communities. We appeared before Senate committees in Tallahassee and filled an auditorium in Pahokee to share our concerns with Senate President Joe Negron. Our voices were heard, and the bill was amended to use existing state-owned land that could store and treat the same amount of water without destroying jobs and our local economies.

As part of Senate Bill 10, the South Florida Water Management District was required to provide a status report on the development of a post authorization change report required for the federal authorization necessary to build a reservoir on the existing A-1, A-2, and adjacent parcels. The district has the option to consider other land "if necessary." But based on the district's status report, it is able to accomplish all of Senate Bill 10's storage and treatment goals on the specific lands identified in SB 10 and the district determined that acquisition of additional lands is not necessary.

The concerns being raised by environmental organizations over these models are totally baseless. The district scientists and engineers have the most data and experience available to be able to design and build these projects, along with more than 20 years of similar Everglades projects, many of which these same organizations opposing the EAA reservoir project have supported.

The reservoirs designed by the district are expected to cost \$1.3 billion to \$2.1 billion. Attempting to acquire more land to build a larger reservoir and treatment project will cost even more while likely not providing any additional benefits.

Under Executive Director Ernie Marks' leadership, the district has managed to comply with an extremely aggressive timeline and strict requirements for the storage and treatment goals established by Senate Bill 10. Every single reservoir configuration modelled by the district meets the goal of 240,000 to 360,000 acre-feet of storage and the water quality treatment performance necessary.

The environmental activists that sought to fast track the EAA reservoir should be claiming victory instead of coming up with arbitrary and unfounded concerns over this project. As representatives of the Glades communities, we appreciate your commitment to following the science and standing up for our communities.

Sincerely,

Mali Gardner, Mayor of Clewiston  
Steve Wilson, Mayor of Belle Glade  
Keith Babb, Mayor of Pahokee  
Joe Kyles, Mayor of South Bay  
JP Sasser, Former Mayor of Pahokee  
Janet Taylor, President of Glades Lives Matter  
Tammy Jackson-Moore, Co-Founder of the Guardians of the Glades  
Desmond Harriott, President, Glades Area Ministerial Association  
Pastor Robert Rease, St. John First Baptist Church Belle Glade  
Bishop Kenny Berry, Grace Covenant Church Belle Glade  
Pastor Albert Polk, Sugar 900AM and Casual Corner (C.B. Fashions)  
Jeff Smith, pastor of the First United Methodist church and member of Clewiston Ministerial Association  
Regina Bohlen, Director of the Pahokee Chamber of Commerce  
Melanie Grimes, Director of the Belle Glade Chamber of Commerce  
Hillary Hyslope, Executive Director of the Clewiston Chamber of Commerce  
Jose "Pepe" Lopez, President of Clewiston Rotary  
Julia du Plooy, Lake Okeechobee Business Alliance  
Mary Ann Martin, Mary Ann & Roland Martin Marina  
Ramon Iglesias, Mary Ann & Roland Martin Marina

CC: Ernie Marks, Executive Director of the South Florida Water Management District  
Dan O'Keefe, Governing Board Chair of the South Florida Water Management District