



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
CIVIL WORKS
108 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0108

JUL 11 2018

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Carper:

In accordance with Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended, I am responsible for determining whether South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) Central Everglades Planning Project Section 203 Integrated Feasibility Study and DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement (March 2018, Amended May 2018), and the process under which the study was developed, comply with Federal laws and regulations. In addition, I must submit a report to Congress that describes the results of my review, including a determination of whether SFWMD's recommended project is feasible; any recommendations I may have concerning SFWMD's recommended plan; and any conditions that I may require for construction of the proposed project.

I have determined that SFWMD's proposed project contained in the Integrated Feasibility Study and DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement is feasible from an engineering and construction viewpoint. However, I have identified significant technical, policy, and legal concerns that are detailed in the enclosed Review Assessment. Concerns associated with the plan and design of SFWMD's proposed project can be addressed through an evaluation/validation effort in the next project phase, subject to authorization by Congress. Conditions for construction of the project include the following: completion of further detailed technical studies to validate the design and cost estimate; completion of National Environmental Policy Act and environmental compliance activities; and compliance with water quality requirements.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has completed its review of my Review Assessment and has provided clearance to submit it to Congress. OMB noted that if authorized, SFWMD's proposed project would need to compete with other proposed investments in future Budgets. However, before SFWMD's proposed project would be eligible for funding in future Budgets, an additional report must be prepared that adequately addresses the concerns, recommendations, and conditions identified within the Review Assessment. A copy of OMB's letter, dated July 10, 2018, is enclosed.

I am sending an identical letter to Chairman Barrasso and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.D. James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

R.D. James
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)