

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

RESOLUTION NUMBER 08-7.2

**A RESOLUTION OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA DECLARING ITS SUPPORT
FOR THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST AND THE SOUTH FLORIDA
WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TO ACQUIRE LAND SOUTH OF LAKE
OKEECHOBEE FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF AMERICA'S
EVERGLADES AND FLORIDA'S COASTAL ESTUARIES**

WHEREAS, America's Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem is a unique expanse of habitats, whose environmental health is critical to the economy and quality of life of South Florida; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2008, Governor Charlie Crist unveiled a momentous strategy to bring about the largest environmental land acquisition in Florida's history and restore America's Everglades in a way never before anticipated; and

WHEREAS, the Governor announced that the South Florida Water Management District will begin negotiating an agreement with United States Sugar Corporation to purchase nearly 300 square miles of land spanning four counties in South Florida; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of as much as 187,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee would provide the "missing link" needed to better protect the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries, and revive, restore and preserve one of America's greatest natural treasures – the Everglades; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District and United States Sugar Corporation signed a "Statement of Principles" that provides the framework for the potential acquisition of property and assets; and

WHEREAS, through successful negotiations and strategic land swaps, vast tracts would be used to reestablish a part of the historic connection between Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades through a managed system of storage and treatment; and

WHEREAS, dedicating significantly more land in the Everglades Agricultural Area to restoration will build upon and enhance the 30-year state-federal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, offering the opportunity and flexibility to store and clean water on a scale never before contemplated; and

WHEREAS, benefits from the land acquisition include huge increases in the availability of water storage, significantly reducing the potential for harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida's coastal rivers and estuaries; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition will prevent thousands of tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades every year and eliminate the need for "back-pumping" water into Lake Okeechobee; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition also provides the potential opportunity to sustain remaining agriculture in the region by eliminating environmental concerns; enhancing the availability of water supply; and fostering green energy production; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has identified the State of Florida's Rural Economic Development Initiative as a resource for working with United States Sugar Corporation, local governments, area businesses, state agencies and the South Florida Water Management District on an economic transition plan for the area; and

WHEREAS, saving the Everglades and protecting Florida's coastal estuaries is an environmental priority for Martin County and its residents; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District's initiative to purchase 187,000 acres of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area is a watershed event for restoring a beloved national treasure – the Everglades;

WHEREAS, Martin County has repeatedly gone on record of being supportive of enhancement conveyance and treatment of Lake Okeechobee water south to the Everglades to help reduce the impacts to coastal estuaries;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Martin County Board of County Commissioners applauds and supports the landmark efforts of Governor Charlie Crist and the South Florida Water Management District to negotiate the acquisition of significant lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area for the purposes of restoring and protecting the northern and southern Everglades and Florida's coastal estuaries.

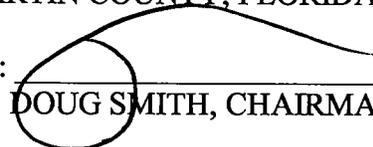
Additionally, Martin County reiterates its commitment to the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) South component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program and urges the South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to move expeditiously on completion of land purchases and construction of the components approved in the Indian River Lagoon South Project Implementation Report. Pursuit of the "Statement of Principles" should in no way supplant efforts to complete the approved IRL Plan.

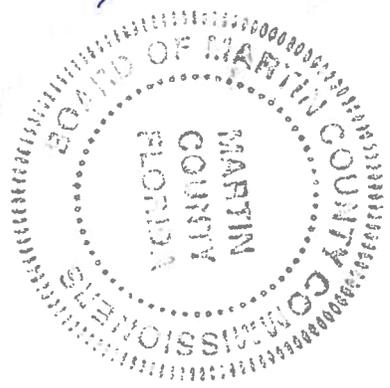
Duly adopted this 1st day of July, 2008.

ATTEST:

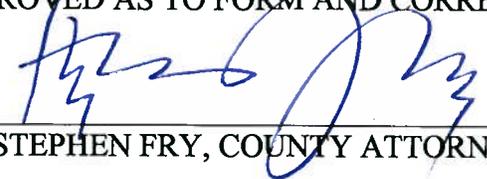
BY: 
MARSHA EWING, CLERK

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: 
DOUG SMITH, CHAIRMAN



APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CORRECTNESS:

BY: 
STEPHEN FRY, COUNTY ATTORNEY