MEMORANDUM

TO: Luis Alejandro, Chief, Water Management Section (USACE)

FROM: John Mitnik, Director, Operations, Engineering & Construction Division (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)

DATE: August 18, 2016

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for August 16, 2016 to August 22, 2016

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from August 16, 2016 to August 22, 2016. On August 15 the Lake Okeechobee stage was 14.77 feet, NGVD, in the middle third of the Low Sub-band, and within one foot of the Intermediate Sub-band of the 2008 LORS. During last week the lake stage increased 0.16 feet.

District wide total rainfall for August up to date is 16% above average. SFWMD forecast is for below-average rainfall for the next two weeks.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook for Central and South Florida indicates equal chances of above-normal, normal, or below-normal rainfall for August 2016. The CPC rainfall outlooks for the 3-month window August to October shows slightly increased chances of above-normal rainfall for the entire District area. The long-range CPC outlook for the 2016-17 dry season is for increased chances of below-normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With the Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends “Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades Impacts. Otherwise no releases to the WCAs”.

Over the 7-day period from August 8, 2016 to August 14, 2016, Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases south through the three major EAA canals were not implemented. The A-1 FEB received about 9,000 acre-feet of EAA runoff. Inflows to STA 3/4 from the A-1 FEB were approximately 8,000 acre-feet. Releases from the lake to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51 amounted to about 2,000 ac-feet. There were no southward releases from the Lake for water supply.

WCA-1 stage is in the middle of Zone A-2 of its regulation schedule and raising. The USACE continues to request the SFWMD to send Lake regulatory releases to WCA-1. Due to high stages in the STAs from handling recent EAA runoff, lake releases to the STAs will not be implemented for this operational period. The USACE also requests the SFWMD not to send Lake Okeechobee releases to WCA-2A and WCA-3A. A-1 FEB is near maximum capacity and will not receive Lake Okeechobee releases. Substantial discharges from STA-2 and STA-3/4 will continue into WCA-2A and 3A, using S-7 and G-335/G-436 and S-8. USACE fully opened the gates at structures S-12A and S-12B last week and the SFWMD followed with the opening of S-343 A and B.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Low Sub-band, less than one foot from the Intermediate Sub-band, and with tributary hydrologic conditions within the Wet classification, Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance suggests no change in the release limits this week: “S-79 up to 3,000 cfs and S-80 up to 1,170 cfs.” In light of the State of Emergency declared by Governor Rick Scott, the USACE utilized the flexibility of LORS 2008 during the past five weeks to reduce discharges to the St. Lucie River and Caloosahatchee River. Release targets last week for S-79 and S-80 were 2,800 cfs and 650 cfs, respectively. The District recommends that the USACE continue to utilize the flexibility of LORS 2008 to make reduced releases.

It is anticipated that the next 2008 LORS Part D release guidance will recommend lower Base Flow Releases to the estuaries, S-79 up to 450 cfs and S-80 up to 200 cfs. This change will result from the switch in the Multi-seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow classification from the Wet to the Normal category. Part C recommendation is not expected to change.

Salinities at the US 1 Bridge location in the St. Lucie Estuary moved from the good to the fair range. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, salinity conditions remain favorable for tape grass in the upper estuary, and poor for oysters at the Cape Coral Bridge. At Shell Point salinity remained in the good range for adult oysters.