



EVERGLADES COALITION

April 9, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Restoring America's Everglades – FY 2022 Energy and Water Appropriations

Dear Chairwoman Feinstein and Ranking Member Kennedy:

On behalf of the Everglades Coalition and its 61 members committed to the restoration of America's Everglades, we greatly appreciate the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee's continued support. As we navigate unprecedented times due to the pandemic and work together to "Build Back Better," we look to your leadership to help galvanize momentum for restoring the Everglades, given the importance of this resilience-building water infrastructure program for South Florida.

We now have a unique opportunity to see critical ecosystem benefits of Everglades restoration actualized, with major Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects slated to cross the finish line over the next four years. To advance these water infrastructure projects and keep pace with state investments, we respectfully ask the Subcommittee to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the **South Florida Ecosystem Restoration program at a minimum of \$725 million for Construction and \$15 million for Operation and Maintenance in FY 2022**. This amount will advance the restoration of America's Everglades for future generations, improve the health and sustainability of more than 2.4 million acres of the greater Everglades ecosystem, reduce polluted water discharges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida's coastal waterways, and help ensure clean drinking water for over 8 million Floridians. We also emphasize the importance of the Army Corps' ability to utilize the Continuing Contracts clause to make use of all contracting tools available to move multiple construction projects forward at the same time and successfully execute the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration program.

Restoring America's Everglades continues to be a unifying issue for Americans and has consistently received bipartisan, bicameral support. Last month, every member of the Florida congressional delegation supported a Presidential budget request of \$725 million for South Florida Ecosystem Restoration construction funding in FY 2022 and to maintain this level for a multi-year, federal investment of \$2.9 billion over the next four years. This is the funding needed to accomplish the restoration milestones in the Everglades Integrated Delivery Schedule and deliver benefits to America's Everglades and the American

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people as soon as possible. Based on the Army Corps' calculations, approximately 65,000-70,000 jobs could be created over the next four years should Everglades restoration receive the necessary funding to carry out authorized construction projects in the Integrated Delivery Schedule.

Everglades restoration is a resilience-building water infrastructure program for South Florida that, when complete, will result in 442,000 jobs over the next several decades. Everglades restoration delivers a 4:1 return on investment and investing immediately in restoration will provide environmental benefits sooner while saving money in the long run. According to the federal government's own estimates, by investing more now, the federal government can save the American taxpayers over \$2 billion on the overall cost of Everglades restoration. As Congress works on FY 2022 spending packages alongside investments for infrastructure, we encourage you to ensure that job-creating investments also increase the resiliency and sustainability of critical infrastructure systems with a focus on nature-based solutions for restoring watersheds and ecosystems.

We have a national responsibility to preserve America's Everglades for future generations. The Army Corps of Engineers plays a lead role fulfilling restoration goals. We greatly appreciate the Energy and Water Subcommittee's long-standing support and commitment to Everglades restoration as we move forward with this monumental restoration effort.

Sincerely,



Mark Perry
Co-Chair



Marisa Carrozzo
Co-Chair

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