



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2014

Army Corps of Engineers
Civil Works Review Board
441 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20314-1000

Dear Civil Works Review Board Members:

We wish to submit our comments to the Army Corps Civil Works Review Board in support of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), and urge the Corps to recognize the urgent need to finalize the project's Chief's Report.

Discharges from Lake Okeechobee have been plaguing the coastal estuaries and communities of Florida for far too long. Each summer when the lake levels are too high for the Corps to safely maintain, fresh water high in bacteria, nitrogen and phosphorus are released in large amounts into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee waterways. These releases contribute to an influx of water harmful to public health, the fragile estuaries, and the local tourism-based economies of the area. Simultaneously in the regions south of the lake, fresh water is desperately needed to restore the natural ecosystem and crucial habitats of the Everglades.

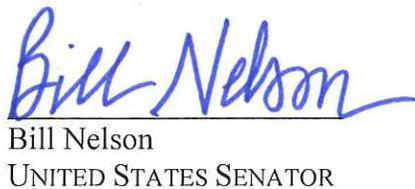
CEPP has multiple benefits for these ecologically distressed regions. The recommended plan would help improve the water quality and water supply of the area and aid in restoring the Everglades ecosystem. The enacted plan would reduce the large freshwater releases sent from Lake Okeechobee by redirecting approximately 210,000 acre-feet of additional water annually to the historical southern flow path while maintaining needed dry season flows. More water to the Southern Everglades will lead to a better functioning ecosystem that will benefit Florida's environment and economy.

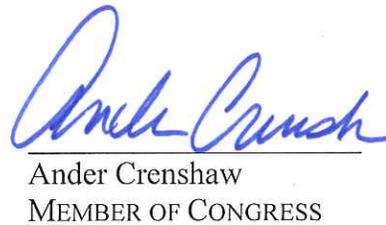
As Congress is days away from final consideration of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) which will only authorize Army Corps projects with completed Chief's Reports, time is of the essence to complete the Chief's Report for this crucial project that will help alleviate the disastrous impacts of Lake Okeechobee releases, improve water quality and help restore one of the world's most critical ecosystems. As the last WRDA legislation was enacted seven years ago, we hope you will appreciate the importance of an expedited process to finalize the Chief's report for this project.

Sincerely,


Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

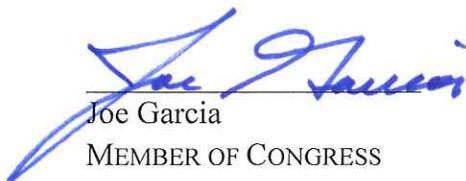

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Cc: Assistant Secretary Jo-Ellen Darcy, Army Corps of Engineers
Secretary Sally Jewell, Department of Interior