

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2016

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
2326-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2017 Energy and Water and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to include funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers relating to the construction of Herbert Hoover Dike (seepage control) at the FY 2016 requested level of \$64.1 million. This is an increase from the President's request of \$49.5 million for this fiscal year.

Increased water levels strain Lake Okeechobee's more than 70-year-old dike, which is considered one of the country's most at-risk of seepage or a breach. To lessen the strain on the dike, the USACE is forced to dump billions of gallons of lake water west into the Caloosahatchee River and east into the St. Lucie River. While lake discharges help avoid flooding south of the lake, they are having damaging environmental consequences on coastal waterways – polluting fishing grounds and in some areas even making water unsafe for human contact. By supporting this request, the importance of restoring natural ecosystems by controlling the fluctuating water levels of Lake Okeechobee through the Herbert Hoover Dike is highlighted.

Given the urgency of the situation, we ask that you strongly consider this request. Thank you for your consideration, if you should have any further questions do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



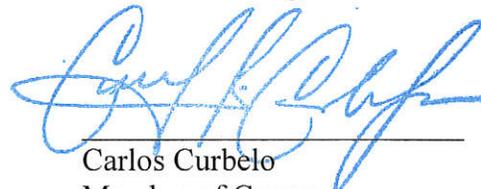
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Curt Clawson
Member of Congress



Patrick E. Murphy
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress