

PATRICK E. MURPHY
18TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
211 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3026
FAX: (202) 225-8398

www.patrickmurphy.house.gov



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0918

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September 9, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
The U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
The U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

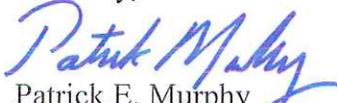
Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

The waterways in my district have been in a state of crisis throughout 2016 due to historic El Niño-fueled rainfall during what would have been Florida's dry season. The unusual amount of rain led to ongoing, polluted, freshwater discharges from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie River to the east and the Caloosahatchee River to the west. The discharges wreak havoc on our nation's most biologically diverse estuary, the Indian River Lagoon, home to more than 4,000 species of plants and animals, including dozens of threatened or endangered species, dolphins, pelicans, and nearly 1/3 of America's manatee population. The hot temperatures, consistent rainfall, and extended daylight of our summer wet season has turned a crisis into an ecological disaster as toxic blue-green algae is devastating communities along both coasts. The toxic blooms harm the economy and tourism, threaten wildlife, and pose a number of health risks.

To provide relief from this ongoing crisis – created by decades of altering the natural hydrology of Florida – we must complete Everglades restoration. Excess water should be cleansed and flow south in a sheet into the heart of the Everglades. Ongoing and planned projects will do just that. With great respect for your work to keep government operations funded into the next fiscal year, I request that the committee provide full funding for the Army Corps of Engineers Construction and Operations and Maintenance Accounts, responsible for Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects, non-CERP projects, and the Central Everglades Planning Project, which will be authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2016.

As renowned Everglades environmentalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas noted, "there are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth, remote, never wholly known." I thank you for your past and sustained commitment for the bipartisan issue of restoring the Everglades, our nation's River of Grass.

Sincerely,


Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS