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Congress of the United States
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April 21, 2016

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your commitment to restoring the Everglades and your understanding of the profoundly dire situation facing Florida's waterways. While the ultimate goals of completing the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), and sending clean water south remain our region's top long-term priorities, the environmental crisis facing the State of Florida demands emergency attention. Due to historic rainfall during the dry season, the Army Corps of Engineers is discharging billions of gallons of polluted freshwater into the brackish estuaries to the east and west of Lake Okeechobee in order to protect the failing Herbert Hoover Dike and the surrounding communities. This deluge into the Indian River Lagoon, America's most biodiverse estuary, threatens our environment, economy, and way of life.

Businesses have cancelled or cut their operations due to the toxic water conditions, forcing many to close after experiencing this on an almost annual basis. The environment, its natural wonders, and plant and animal life are being destroyed and are on the verge of total collapse.

We need emergency federal assistance to provide immediate relief and to bring short- and long-term projects online. Therefore, I am seeking every avenue of funding and applicable resources to assist residents and our precious environment.

- 1) Work with the Interior Department, Army Corps of Engineers, and other agencies to find additional land to store water north and south of Lake Okeechobee and ultimately restore the natural southward flow of the Everglades;
- 2) Emergency funding for Herbert Hoover Dike repairs;
- 3) Emergency Presidential Disaster Declaration-- accompanied by assistance from FEMA and USDA, in addition to the recent announcement of emergency SBA loans;
- 4) Estuary restoration funding;
- 5) Everglades restoration funding and fast tracking high impact Everglades projects in both construction and planning phases;
- 6) Expansion of proven water farm projects;

- 7) Creation of a septic to sewer infrastructure assistance program to partner with state and local governments and homeowners.

Thank you for your unwavering focus on clean water and restoring the Everglades, our nation's River of Grass. Finally solving this crisis will require future administrations to carry forward your commitment to CEPP, CERP, and sending clean water south. In the meantime, I look forward to working together to provide emergency relief to Floridians impacted by this crisis.

Sincerely,



Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS