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Congress of the United States
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January 31, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my grave concern for the state of the waterways in Florida's 18th District, and to bring to your attention some ways you can help. Funding Phase Two of the C-44 component of the Indian River Lagoon Everglades restoration project, and expedited completion of the Army Corps of Engineer's final Chief's Report of the Central Everglades Planning Project will result in large scale reductions in the environmental harm occurring in the waters of the Treasure Coast and Palm Beaches.

Nutrient heavy freshwater from Lake Okeechobee and local runoff inundate the waterways of the St. Lucie River and its estuary every year. The water quality of the local waterways this summer reached such terrible levels that it made national headlines. The St. Lucie River contained levels of enteric bacteria so high that local officials posted public health warnings, and toxic algae blooms were declared throughout the river and estuary.

In addition to the threat to the public health the water quality poses, this ecologically rare area has been impacted in ways many fear may not be reversible. The St. Lucie Estuary, known to be the most biologically diverse estuary in North America, is severely damaged by the contaminated freshwater that inundates the waterways during periods of heavy rainfall, and many species including some listed as endangered die in large numbers.

Key portion of the local Everglades Restoration Project

The federal government responded to this situation in 2007 by authorizing the first stages of the Indian River Lagoon South Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project. Once completed, the project will reduce the harm to these waterways by providing water storage and treatment areas. Currently the C-44 reservoir and stormwater treatment areas, the most vital component of the project, are under construction. Funding for this project to move forward into its next and most important phase is especially crucial.

I urge in the strongest possible terms that your Administration allocate funding to begin Phase Two of the crucial C-44 project. While this multiyear project phase is slated for completion in

2018, it's important that funding be allocated this year to begin work on the second phase in order to complete this vital project as soon as possible.

Central Everglades Planning Project

Another vital component to providing relief to the battered waterways of the 18th District is to allow more water to flow naturally to the south of Lake Okeechobee instead of forcing releases to the east and west where the water causes significant damage. The Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), which will help restore the natural water flow and increase the amount of water that can flow into the central Everglades, is currently in the final stages of approval and requires a final Chief's Report from the Army Corps of Engineers to Congress in order to be authorized.

While the policies in the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) are still being finalized, time is of the essence for the Corps to complete the Chief's Report on this vital project. The sooner that this project is authorized the sooner that restoration can progress without further delay.

As must be clear by now, the completion of the C-44 storage and treatment component and authorization of CEPP are of the utmost importance to me and the constituents I am privileged to represent. I ask for your help to prevent dangerous pollutants and nutrients from destroying our nation's most biodiverse estuary. Together, the completion of these projects will provide relief to our severely harmed waterways. With your help, the precious waterways and estuaries of the Treasure Coast and Palm Beaches may have a chance at recovery. The region's health, safety, environment and economy depend on it.

Sincerely,



Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS