



April 25, 2008

Senator Burt L. Saunders
Senator Nan H. Rich
Senator Paula Dockery
Senator Don Gaetz
Senator Dennis L. Jones, D.C.
Senator Charlie Justice

Re: Support for SW Florida Community Budget Initiatives

Honorable Senators & Representatives:

We write to ask for your support of regional water quality projects submitted through the 2008 Community Budget Requests for three southwest Florida basins including the Lower Charlotte Harbor, Caloosahatchee and Estero Bay Watersheds. The listed projects are regional in scope and will provide multiple diverse benefits including: improving water quality in priority water bodies, water storage, flood protection, restoration, public recreation, and environmental education. These projects will produce measurable results and have tangible community support.

The Lower Charlotte Harbor requests funding for 6 water quality construction projects, and 3 habitat restoration projects, totaling \$6 million, located in Lee and Charlotte Counties. The Caloosahatchee request will fund 15 water quality construction projects, 2 habitat restoration projects, 1 structural best management practices agricultural program, and two recon/analysis projects. These projects are located in Lee, Hendry, and Glades Counties and total over \$20 million. The Estero Bay Watershed Initiative will fund 13 water quality construction projects, 1 habitat restoration project, and 4 recon/analysis projects. These projects are located in Lee County and total over \$9 million.

These initiatives have prioritized substantive water quality construction and restoration projects that will have a significant impact on reducing nutrient loads to impaired water bodies within the basin. These efforts will assist in meeting the coming TMDL targets that are currently being developed.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Rae Ann Wessel

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rae Ann Wessel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Natural Resource Policy Director