

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 19, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-131 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Republican  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-146A Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Byron Dorgan  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
On Energy and Water Development  
186 Dirksen  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Domenici  
Ranking Republican  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
On Energy and Water Development  
188 Dirksen  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-218 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Republican  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
On Energy and Water Development  
Room 2362-B  
Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable David L. Hobson  
Ranking Republican  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
On Energy and Water Development  
Room 1016 Longworth  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Byrd, Dorgan, Obey, and Visclosky and Ranking Members Cochran, Domenici, Lewis and Hobson:

As you begin to develop spending priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, we respectfully request supplemental funding to the President's proposed 2009 budget for Everglades Restoration and the projects that support this effort. Specifically, we request additional funding for construction of the Kissimmee River Restoration project, \$20 million above the President's request for the Indian River Lagoon South project, \$6.9 million above the President's request for Modified Waters Delivery, and \$42.6 million above the President's request for the rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike.

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), the most ambitious ecosystem restoration plan in history, was authorized as a part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA). While, the first major components of that comprehensive plan

were authorized by last year's WRDA bill, we are still far behind schedule on implementing CERP.

We were very pleased that the President's budget included a total of \$255 million for the South Florida ecosystem and Everglades Restoration through the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior. Specifically, we appreciate the budget's call for funding a vital CERP project, the Picayune Strand, at a reasonable level in FY 2009 of \$24.2 million. The Picayune Strand project will contribute to the restoration of a habitat that supports the endangered Florida panther, the red-cockaded woodpecker and other endangered species. Furthermore, the project will promote traditional sheetflow and benefit the Everglades National Park and the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge. We urge you to provide this funding.

Unfortunately, the President's budget does not recommend funding for construction for another critical CERP project, the Indian River Lagoon South, which is located in Martin and St. Lucie Counties. When implemented, this project will provide protection to the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon estuaries from the periodic surges that race downstream when Lake Okeechobee reaches high levels. This project also would restore a large amount of wetlands, providing natural storage and wildlife habitat.

While we are pleased that the President did ask for some limited funding for design work for reservoirs in that project, we strongly feel that the start of construction for this project can not wait another year. We understand that the Corps has the capability to spend \$20 million in construction funding on the Indian River Lagoon South in FY 2009, and we respectfully ask that you provide the full capability amount. We would add that the people of Martin County have contributed, to date, over \$50 million so far to purchase the land needed for this project.

The President also requested \$31 million for the restoration of the Kissimmee River. Work on this project involves reversing the channelization of this wonderful river. The parts of the river that have been restored to their natural meandering state now are a showcase of wildlife, but more still needs to be done. We understand that the capability for work for this project could be as much as \$69 million in FY 2009. Therefore, we respectfully ask you that you provide increased funding for the Kissimmee River project above the \$31 million included in the President's budget request.

The President's budget includes a total of \$60 million for Modified Waters Delivery project (MWD), \$50 million for the Corps and \$10 million for the Department of the Interior. The Corps has informed us that their capability for this project is \$56.9 million. Given the Corps' increased capability level, we respectfully request a total of \$66.9 million for MDW in FY09. While this project has seen delays and setbacks, the Florida delegation worked cooperatively to include directive language for the Corps in WRDA 2007 (P.L. 110-114) and set it on a path toward completion. Our priority for this project is ecological benefits to the Everglades National Park, and we believe this can be done in a cost effective manner. We expect the Corps to submit a Limited Reevaluation Report to the Congress by July 31, 2008. Subsequent construction on a selected plan could

commence in the early fall of this year. Because completion of MWD is critical to the success of Everglades restoration, we request that the full funding of \$66.9 million be appropriated this year.

Finally, we remain concerned that the President's budget does not provide full funding for accelerated repairs to the Herbert Hoover Dike surrounding Lake Okeechobee. While the Corps has the capability of spending \$120 million in FY 2009, the President's budget calls for only \$77.4 million. As recently as November 2007, the Army Corps of Engineers' Dam Safety Action Classification External Peer Review Panel designated the Dike "urgent and compelling...due to its...potential to cause catastrophic life safety, economic and environmental consequences should a breach occur." In order to ensure the safety and security of the lakeside communities, we respectfully request full funding for the expedited rehabilitation of the Dike at \$120 million.

As Members of Florida's Congressional delegation, we strongly support supplemental funding to the President's budget for the Everglades and South Florida ecosystem and request that you include this funding in the appropriate spending bills. Thank you for your continued support of Everglades Restoration and previous support for these projects, and we appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this request.

We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

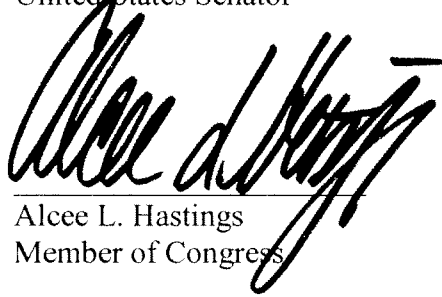
Sincerely,



Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



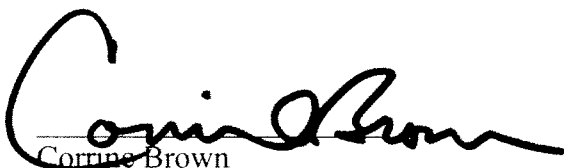
Mel Martinez  
United States Senator



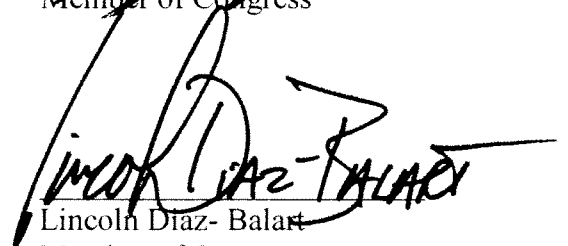
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



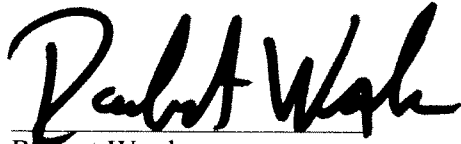
Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



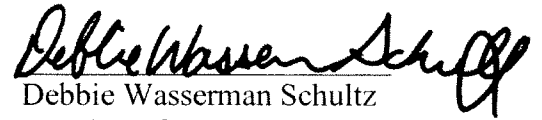
Connie Brown  
Member of Congress



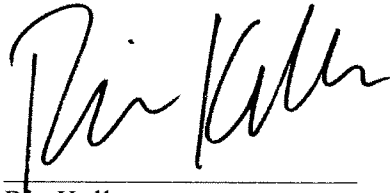
Lincoln Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



Robert Wexler  
Member of Congress



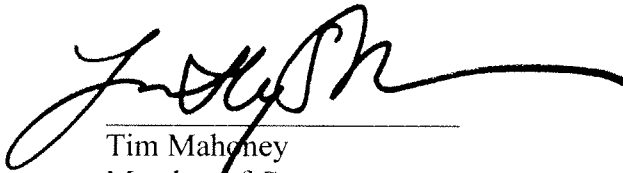
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Ric Keller  
Member of Congress



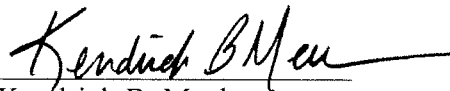
Ron Klein  
Member of Congress



Tim Mahoney  
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



Kendrick B. Meek  
Member of Congress