

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2009

The Honorable Peter Orszag
Director of Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Dr. Orszag:

Congratulations on your new role as Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

On behalf of the Florida Congressional Delegation, we would like to call your attention to an issue of great importance involving the restoration of America's Everglades.

Late last year, we were informed that the OMB decided to defer a decision on a policy change negotiated between the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) regarding land valuation. Both entities negotiated for months over the state's desire to change the current land valuation policy for land it acquired for restoration projects contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). For your review, we have enclosed correspondence between the state and the ACOE regarding the policy change.

This action has delayed the Chief's Report, the final decision document produced by the ACOE, needed for Congress to request authorization for construction of the C-43 West Storage Reservoir and Broward County Water Preserve Area projects. Already, the federal, state, and local communities have invested millions in acquiring land where the projects will be constructed. Not only does the delay harm the Everglades, it damages the goodwill between the local, state and federal partners in restoration.

We respectfully request that OMB work with the State of Florida and the Army Corps of Engineers to provide an expeditious resolution to this issue. We are also requesting a follow up meeting with you and your staff in the next month to monitor the progress on this issue and to discuss the proposed solutions to this problem. Thank you for your time, we look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



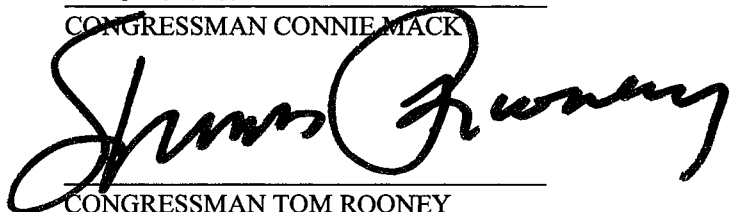
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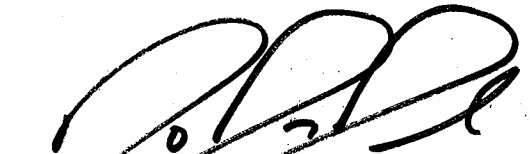


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CONGRESSMAN MARIO DIAZ-BALART



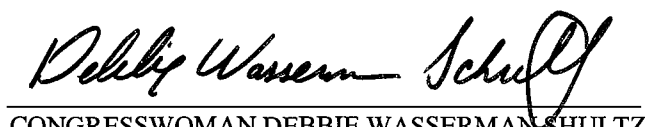
CONGRESSMAN ALCEE HASTINGS



CONGRESSMAN LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART



CONGRESSMAN KENDRICK MEEK



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