

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 17, 2024

The Honorable Michael Connor  
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works  
Headquarters, US Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G. Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Mr. Connor:

Since 2019, more than 65 federal, state, and regional projects have either been completed, broken ground, or hit major milestones - including the C-44 reservoir, the Stormwater Treatment Cell 1 in the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir, and restoration of the Herbert Hoover Dike surrounding Lake Okeechobee. We appreciate your leadership and support for restoration of America's Everglades through the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and as members of the Everglades Caucus, we are excited by the current progress and momentum.

As you know, the Everglades is a national treasure, one of the true ecological wonders of the world, and further efforts to preserve this unique ecosystem is vitally important to its long-term viability. Comprised of the diverse habitats and sweeping watershed that includes over 2.5 million acres of federally protected lands and waters at Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, and fourteen National Wildlife Refuges; 2,800 nautical miles of marine habitat at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; and environmentally and culturally significant Tribal Lands, its restoration is no small undertaking but is undoubtedly a worthy one.

The real progress being made by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the State of Florida goes hand in hand with the increased investment at both the Federal and State levels. This partnership continues to flourish as we all work together to restore the historic flow of the Everglades which proves vital to Florida's environment, economy, drinking water supply, and quality of life. As the Biden-Harris Administration begins to formulate their budget for USACE Civil Works as part of the FY26 President's Budget, we write today to share our esteemed support for the continuation of funding for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration line that meet or exceed \$725 million – the amount that has been requested by the Florida Delegation for the past four years. The Everglades is central to Florida's economy; its biodiversity is truly an environmental marvel, home to one of the world's largest wetlands frequented by over a million visitors each year.

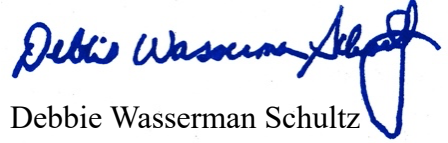
We are blessed to have natural treasures like the Everglades National Park right in our backyards, that over eight million Floridians rely on for their drinking water. We hope the FY26 President's budget, with your input, will continue the bold vision for Everglades restoration – a banner example of America's ability to restore the environment, and in doing so support the economy, livelihood, and way of life for millions in Florida.

Thank you again for your leadership and we hope you will consider, within all applicable rules and regulations, our input as you work to generate the Civil Works' portion of the FY26 President's Budget.

Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



C. Scott Franklin  
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds  
Member of Congress



Bill Posey  
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Darren Soto  
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Carlos A. Gimenez  
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



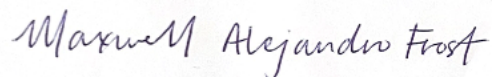
Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress



John H. Rutherford  
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster  
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Brian Mast  
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
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Neal P. Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress