



FLORIDA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

THE VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

June 17, 2024

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
House Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
House Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Sam Graves and Ranking Member Rick Larsen:

Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) is a non-profit organization representing 132,000+ member-families. We are the largest, general agricultural membership organization in the state, representing farmers and ranchers of over 300 various commodities. We appreciate the opportunity to express our support and stress the importance regarding the upcoming markup to the bipartisan 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

In Florida, Everglades Restoration is a prime example of that collaborative and bipartisan spirit. Originally authorized in WRDA 2000, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and Everglades Restoration projects has had staunch support and collaboration from utilities, municipalities, environmental organizations, agriculture, and other key stakeholders. The strength of Everglades Restoration has come through extensive local, science-based, inclusive planning efforts that yield project designs that are broadly supported.

Here at Florida Farm Bureau Federation:

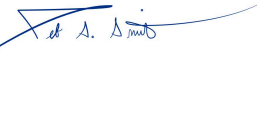
- We support continuation of agricultural production in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), the C139 basin and the Northern Everglades
- We support the Everglades Forever Act, the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), the Integrated Delivery Schedule and the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project (collectively, the Everglades Restoration Programs)
- Any changes made in the Everglades Restoration Programs must be based on sound, scientific evidence and a cost-benefit analysis
- We support balanced implementation of the Everglades Restoration Programs in a manner that provides for water-related needs of the region, including the enhancement of water supply and water quality while maintaining flood control

- We support the continued implementation of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Best Management Practices (BMP's) throughout the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee watersheds to reduce nutrient loading to the lake and estuaries
- We encourage state agencies to evaluate purposes for land ownership, to determine if objectives can be accomplished under private ownership. Agencies should transfer title back to prior ownership where feasible

We do, however, oppose the further acquisition of agricultural land in the EAA for water restoration until the current Everglades Restoration Programs are completed and fully operational.

Thank you for your attention to our support and comments as we approach consideration of the 2024 Water Resources Development Act. I want to thank you and commend you for the work you do in Congress. We look forward to working with you during the finalization of the 2024 Water Resources Development Act to support the authorization of key Everglades restoration projects in an inclusive, bipartisan manner.

Most Respectfully,



Jeb S. Smith
President
Florida Farm Bureau Federation