



EVERGLADES COALITION

July 17, 2024

The Honorable Joe Manchin, Chair
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso, Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support of Nomination of Shannon Estenoz as Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and members of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

We write on behalf of the Everglades Coalition, an alliance of nearly 60 conservation organizations dedicated to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades, to express our strong support for the nomination of Shannon Estenoz as Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

The Greater Everglades is 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 fifteen National Wildlife Refuges; 2,800 nautical miles of marine habitat at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; and environmentally and culturally significant Tribal lands of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The health of significant water bodies like the Kissimmee River, Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee River, St. Lucie River, Florida Bay, and Biscayne Bay are intrinsically linked throughout the Greater Everglades.

Since the authorization of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) in 2000, the United States has invested billions of dollars in the protection and restoration of the lands and waters that make up the Greater Everglades, with a particular emphasis on Everglades National Park. In partnership with the State of Florida, CERP is the largest ecosystem restoration initiative in the world. Its success will also impact the water supply for 9+ million people and the state's economy. Maintaining strong federal leadership and momentum to complete essential projects to restore clean water flow throughout the watershed is vital to the future of Everglades National Park and Florida's natural and built communities.

The Everglades Coalition is a 501(c)3 alliance of local, state, and national conservation organizations dedicated to the full protection and restoration of America's Everglades.

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To that end, the **Everglades Coalition extends our full support to the nomination of Shannon Estenoz as Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.** Ms. Estenoz comes to this nomination with three decades of environmental protection experience, including leading DOI's Office of Everglades Restoration Initiatives and serving as Chair of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. Prior to her roles at DOI, Ms. Estenoz served three terms as National Co-Chair of the Everglades Coalition, working with a dynamic group of NGOs, Tribal and agency leaders, business owners, bipartisan local and state elected officials, and concerned members of the community to advance Everglades restoration.

In her current role as DOI Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks, she has been a strong leader not only for the Everglades but for lands, waters, and cultural resources across the nation. Leadership of this caliber is essential as our public lands and waters face the mounting threats of resource protection, climate change, visitation management, and the pursuit of equity and justice.

Many of us in the Everglades Coalition have had the privilege and pleasure of working with Ms. Estenoz for many years in South Florida, and witnessed critical restoration efforts advance under her leadership thanks to a combination of her effective bipartisan approach, strategic insight, knowledge, and passion for the ecosystem. We fully support the nomination of Shannon Estenoz as Deputy Secretary of DOI and look forward to the good work the agency will continue to advance under her strong leadership.

Thank you for your consideration,



Mark Perry
Co-Chair



Kelly Cox
Co-Chair

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