



Everglades Coalition

March 29, 2018

The Honorable Ken Calvert, Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
1060 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

On behalf of the 63 members of the Everglades Coalition committed to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades, we greatly appreciate the Interior Subcommittee's long-time support for Everglades restoration. Your ongoing leadership has kept restoration moving forward, and we hope to continue building on the many successes with more on the horizon.

U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)

We respectfully request the total amount of **\$70 million for FY 2019 for the four bureaus within DOI** that are working together to restore the Everglades – the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). This amount will advance critical water infrastructure projects under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) as well as non-CERP projects that will help restore federal lands in South Florida such as Everglades and Biscayne National Parks, combat invasive species like the Burmese python and the invasive exotic plant invasion at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, reduce polluted water discharges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida's coastal waterways, and help ensure clean drinking water for 8 million Floridians.

Unfortunately, the President's FY 2019 budget falls short of this funding level by proposing a total amount of \$50 million, with cuts to all bureaus from FY 2017 enacted levels. Of particular concern is the drastic cut to USGS, reducing it from \$6 million in FY 2017 to only \$1 million. USGS provides research, science, and data for Everglades restoration to address the quality, quantity, timing, and distribution of freshwater throughout the ecosystem. USGS researches and monitors the effects of altered water flows, which is critically important for baseline data and for assessing the ecosystem responses after restoration projects are completed. Without USGS, we will not have the data necessary to know if we are making informed investments in restoration projects to achieve the desired results.

Committed to full protection and restoration of America's Everglades

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon Florida
Audubon of Southwest Florida
Audubon of the Western Everglades
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Backcountry Fly Fishers of Naples
Bullsugar Alliance
Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association/
Riverwatch
Center for Biological Diversity
Clean Water Action
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society
Earthjustice
Environment Florida
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
Everglades Trust
Florida Conservation Voters Education Fund
Florida Defenders of the Environment
Florida Keys Environmental Fund
Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Oceanographic Society
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall
Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
International Dark-Sky Association,
FL Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League Florida Division
Izaak Walton League Florida Keys Chapter
Izaak Walton League Mangrove Chapter
Last Stand
League of Women Voters of Florida
Loxahatchee River Coalition
Martin County Conservation Alliance
Miami Pine Rocklands Coalition
Miami Waterkeeper
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
North Carolina Outward Bound School
Ocean Research & Conservation Association
Reef Relief
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
Save It Now, Glades!
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Florida Chapter
Sierra Club Broward Group
Sierra Club Calusa Group
Sierra Club Central Florida Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
Snook and Gamefish Foundation
South Florida Audubon Society
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
The Institute for Regional Conservation
The National Wildlife Federation
The Urban Environment League of
Greater Miami
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Tropical Audubon Society

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

We respectfully request **\$1.7 million for FY 2019 for EPA's South Florida Geographic Program**. This amount helps ensure clean water flows through Everglades National Park and Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge by monitoring and enforcing the pollution limit. Through the South Florida geographic program, EPA works jointly with federal and state agencies to provide extensive information about hydrological conditions and changing water quality levels in Everglades National Park and monitor reef and seagrass health at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. EPA also works with the State of Florida on the Stormwater Treatment Areas, a successful state-federal partnership that has resulted in improved water quality for the Greater Everglades ecosystem.

In addition, we request full funding **for the National Estuary Program (NEP) under EPA in FY 2019 according to its recent 2016 reauthorization, with at least \$650,000 allocated to each of the 28 NEPs and \$1.5 million for the newly authorized NEP competitive program**. The National Estuary Program is important for Everglades restoration. Two of the four Florida NEPs serve the Greater Everglades ecosystem: the Charlotte Harbor NEP and the Indian River NEP, which focus on the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers and Estuaries respectively. These two estuaries have been plagued with nutrient-laden water from Lake Okeechobee that has led to recurring algae blooms, harming the water quality, wildlife, and the dependent tourism economy. The NEP non-regulatory consensus-based approach of working with governmental, industry, and non-governmental partners to implement projects addressing water quality, fisheries, seagrasses, oysters, and other exceptional natural resources is very effective and is a wise investment. For every federal dollar spent on this program, it enables \$19 worth of restoration to be done. Their work not only assists Everglades restoration, but also protects important federal lands in the area including multiple National Wildlife Refuges such as the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

Unfortunately, the President's FY 2019 budget proposal eliminates both the South Florida Geographic Program and the NEP under EPA, which would remove critical resources and contributions to Everglades restoration and would only exacerbate the problems we are facing today.

Now is the time when we need to be investing more to restore federal and tribal lands in South Florida and reduce polluted water discharges from Lake Okeechobee. We have a national responsibility to preserve America's Everglades for future generations, and DOI and EPA play lead roles fulfilling restoration goals and are committed to managing these resources in the federal interest.

We greatly appreciate your Subcommittee's continued support and commitment to Everglades restoration as we move forward with this monumental restoration effort.

Sincerely,



Mark Perry
State Co-Chair



Michael J. Baldwin
State Co-Chair

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