March 26, 2010

The Honorable James Moran
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations, 2476 Rayburn HOB, Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Moran,

On behalf of the Everglades Coalition, we write to urge continued support for restoration of America’s Everglades. The Everglades Coalition is an alliance of 53 National, State, and local organizations dedicated to full restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem and collectively we have more than 6 million members nationwide. We are grateful that the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies has helped create the wave of momentum and progress that Everglades restoration is experiencing. Adequately funding the Department of Interior’s projects in Fiscal Year 2011, and appropriating $15 million for the Modified Water Deliveries project, will enable this progress to continue, and move us closer to achieving ecological benefits.

This past year has brought momentum with the groundbreaking of three critical projects: Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park (“ModWaters”), Picayune Strand, and C-111 Spreader Canal Western project. We are encouraged by President Obama’s budget for Everglades restoration, which is a $6 million increase from the funds appropriated in FY2010, and clearly shows his commitment to preserving this unique ecosystem.

Important efforts to build upon the one-mile bridge along Tamiami Trail under ModWaters by authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to develop the next steps have also seen progress. The National Park Service will reveal its draft plan this spring, and we are optimistic that it considers many more miles of bridging, which science has shown is what we need to restore water flow into Everglades National Park.

The President’s budget recommends $8 million for ModWaters, yet DOI needs $30 million to complete the project, and move on to the next phase. While we certainly recognize the serious nature of this year’s budget constraints even for a project that is a priority for the Secretary of the Interior, we urge you to increase this figure to $15 million so we can complete ModWaters promptly and begin the next steps.

Thank you for your continued support of this restoration plan for the benefit of all Americans.

Sincerely,

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