March 29, 2018

The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
2362B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
1060 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

On behalf of the 63 members of the Everglades Coalition committed to the protection and restoration of America’s Everglades, we greatly appreciate the Energy and Water 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.

To build on this progress in FY 2019, we respectfully request the full capacity of the Army Corps for South Florida Ecosystem Restoration, which we believe to be approximately $132 million for construction and $10 million for operation and maintenance. This amount will allow critical water infrastructure projects to move forward that will restore federal lands in South Florida, reduce polluted water discharges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida’s coastal waterways, and help ensure clean drinking water for 8 million Floridians.

Specifically this funding will advance key Everglades restoration projects under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), such as Picayune Strand Restoration, Indian River Lagoon-South, Broward County Water Preserve Area, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands, and CERP Design. It also would help advance the Central Everglades Project, specifically the Army Corps’ completion of the Validation Report, which we hope will be expedited so that work can begin on the Project Participation Agreement as soon as possible. In addition to CERP projects, there are two non-CERP projects that are very close to completion that would receive funding – Kissimmee River Restoration and C-111 South Dade.

Unfortunately, the President’s FY 2019 budget proposal falls short of this funding level by proposing only $67.5 million for construction and no funding for operation and maintenance. For the world’s largest restoration effort to be successful, the federal agencies involved must have the funding needed to accomplish their goals. If this budget becomes reality, we believe that vital parts of Everglades restoration will not happen.

Committed to full protection and restoration of America’s Everglades
Now is the time when we need to be investing more to restore the Everglades and reduce polluted water discharges from Lake Okeechobee. We have a national responsibility to preserve America’s Everglades for future generations, and the Army Corps plays a lead role fulfilling restoration goals.

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