



# Everglades Coalition

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  
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  
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 Florida Wildlife Federation  
The Institute for Regional Conservation  
The National Wildlife Federation  
The Urban Environment League of  
Greater Miami

July 07, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert, Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum, Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

On behalf of the 61 members of the Everglades Coalition committed to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades, we greatly appreciate your Subcommittee's long-time support for Everglades restoration. Your ongoing leadership has kept restoration on a strong and steady path.

Most recently, thank you for the funding levels in the FY 2017 spending bill, which included \$63.3 million for agencies within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) that implement Everglades restoration projects and \$1.7 million for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) South Florida Geographic Program. These funding levels will help federal agencies fulfill their lead role in achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan for the benefit of the federally protected lands, including national parks and wildlife refuges, and tribal lands in South Florida that are currently in distress from lack of clean water.

We write to share our concerns regarding the President's FY 2018 budget proposal related to Everglades restoration. For the world's largest restoration effort to be successful, the federal agencies involved must have the funding needed to accomplish their goals. The FY 2018 budget proposes a \$10 million cut to Everglades restoration – from \$63 million in FY 2017 down to \$53 million. As stated in the FY 2018 budget justifications for the National Park Service, "[a] decrease in funding would result in fewer financial resources and staff to support the restoration, preservation, and protection of federal lands in the Everglades." If this budget becomes reality, we believe that vital parts of Everglades restoration will not happen.

Specifically, the proposed budget hamstrings federal agencies that are essential for restoring America's Everglades.

***Committed to full protection and restoration of America's Everglades***

**DOI - U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Environments Program:** The Trump FY 2018 budget proposes a \$5 million cut to the USGS Environments Program, reducing it from \$6 million in FY 2016 and 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 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 restoration projects we are investing in are achieving the desired results. This proposed budget cut, as noted in the USGS budget justifications, would “limit the scientific information available to the NPS, FWS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the State of Florida to help inform investments for management and restoration.”

**EPA South Florida Geographic Program:** The Trump FY 2018 budget proposes to eliminate the EPA South Florida Geographic Program. It received \$1.7 million in FY 2016 and 2017.

- EPA is a critical federal partner for restoring the Everglades by helping to ensure clean water flows through Everglades National Park and Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge by monitoring and enforcing the pollution limit. Through this 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.

**EPA National Estuary Program:** The Trump FY 2018 budget proposes to eliminate the National Estuary Program. It received on average \$26 million in FY 2016 and 2017.

- The EPA National Estuary Program (NEP) is also important for Everglades restoration, and the proposal to eliminate the NEPs would remove critical resources and contributions from non-governmental partners. 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 \$35 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.

Now is the time when we need to be investing more to restore federal and tribal lands in South Florida, reduce polluted water discharges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida’s coastal waterways, and help ensure drinking water for 8 million Floridians. These proposed budget cuts will only exacerbate the problems we are facing today.

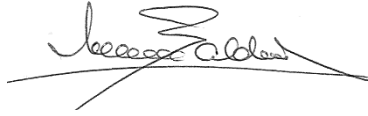
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We hope you will consider our concerns as you work on the FY 2018 Interior spending bill. We look forward to working with you more as we move forward with this monumental restoration effort, fulfilling our promise to future generations.

Sincerely,



Mark Perry  
Co-Chair



Michael J. Baldwin  
Co-Chair

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