



JOURNEY TO RESTORE AMERICA'S

Everglades



January 20, 2021

President Joe Biden
Vice President Kamala Harris
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Bold Vision and Investment to Restore America's Everglades

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

On behalf of the Everglades Coalition – an alliance of 61 conservation groups – we look forward to your leadership on protection of land, water, and wildlife across the nation, as well as your focus on a climate resilient future for our country. We are excited to collaborate with the Biden-Harris administration to continue the important work of restoring America's Everglades.

The Greater Everglades ecosystem 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 fourteen National Wildlife Refuges; 2,800 nautical miles of marine habitat at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; and environmentally and culturally significant Tribal Lands. The health of significant waterbodies like the Kissimmee River, Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee River, St. Lucie River, Florida Bay, and Biscayne Bay are intrinsically linked as regions among the Greater Everglades.

Clean water is the lifeblood of South Florida. The health of each region within the Greater Everglades – and with the connected ecosystem as a whole – is essential to the health of our water supply, economy, public health, climate resilience, and quality of life. Yet Floridians remain plagued by a water crisis that is decades in the making – since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers first began deconstruction of the Everglades nearly a century ago. Now, our generation has the opportunity and obligation to bring back the River of Grass and ensure a clean water future for Florida.

President Biden and Vice President Harris, we call on you to execute a bold vision for America's Everglades by including \$2.9 billion in federal restoration funding over four years. After decades of laying the groundwork for restoration success including data collection, planning, and project design, your Administration has the opportunity to invest in water infrastructure projects. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has identified an opportunity to invest \$725 million per fiscal year, beginning in FY22, and put those funds to work building projects that will improve water quality, water supply, and habitat connectivity.

This opportunity could not come at a more critical time. Investing in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) will not only improve Florida's environment and water quality, it will also create tens of thousands of quality jobs for Floridians. The end-result of these efforts will also bolster the tourism and fishing economies that support hundreds of thousands of American families as we seek to recover from the hardship of Covid-19.

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We stand firmly with your vision for a climate resilient future for our nation – we cannot afford to waste any more time addressing the climate crisis. Expediting CERP implementation is one of Florida's strongest climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. Everglades restoration will help protect our municipal water supplies from saltwater intrusion, strengthen our shorelines to protect inland communities from more frequent and intense storms, and help sequester tremendous amounts of carbon through restoration of mangrove and seagrass habitat.

Everglades restoration is a unifying issue. Florida's bipartisan congressional delegation has been allied in seeking higher levels of CERP funding for many years because our leaders know that Floridians will always rally around clean water – the cornerstone of our environment, economy, and quality of life. Everglades restoration also enjoys the strong financial support of the State of Florida as the non-federal project sponsor responsible for 50% of the investment in restoration.

At the same time, we are encouraged that the Biden-Harris Administration will begin the important work of reversing damaging national environmental policies that put at risk the water, wildlife, air and other resources critical to the Everglades and the rest of the country. Over the last four years, we have witnessed an extensive series of rollbacks to the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act and other national policies that leave places like the Everglades vulnerable to destruction and damage. As Everglades advocates, we know the various ways federal agencies have implemented these laws to protect and restore the Everglades, ensuring restoration goals are met without unanticipated adverse environmental consequences.


President Biden, you have the unique opportunity to enact a bold plan to complete significant Everglades restoration projects in the next four years. While leaders from both parties have contributed to the success of Everglades restoration efforts to date, your Administration will take the helm as a number of the largest CERP projects are ready to cross the finish line. Funding levels in these next four years will determine the outcome of our nation's longstanding efforts to restore America's Everglades. We invite you to commit a multi-year funding investment that will deliver on clean water, climate resilience, quality jobs, and a strengthened economy in Florida by including \$725 million in the Presidential budget request to Congress, totaling \$2.9 billion over four years.

Please know that each of our organizations stands ready to assist your Administration in any way possible as we work to achieve our shared goals for America's Everglades. We hope to celebrate a record number of project completions, ribbon cuttings, and restoration successes during your Presidency – and we look forward to welcoming you back to witness the progress being made to restore the Everglades.

Sincerely,



Marisa Carrozzo
Co-Chair, Everglades Coalition
Conservancy of Southwest Florida



Mark Perry
Co-Chair, Everglades Coalition
Florida Oceanographic Society

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The Everglades Coalition is an alliance of 61 local, state and national conservation and environmental organizations dedicated to full restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem, from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes into Lake Okeechobee and to the estuaries, through the River of Grass, out to Florida Bay and the Keys.

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

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