

# PRESS RELEASE

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**DATE:** January 26, 2017

**CONTACT:** Cara Capp, National Co-Chair, Everglades Coalition  
P: 305.546.6689 or [ccapp@npca.org](mailto:ccapp@npca.org)

## Everglades Coalition Supports SB 10, Applauds Florida Senator Rob Bradley for Restoration Leadership

*Bill introduced in the Florida Senate would provide a new source of freshwater for Everglades National Park while relieving northern coastal estuaries from excessive harmful Lake Okeechobee discharges*

**Tallahassee, FL** – The [Everglades Coalition](http://www.evergladescoalition.org) is calling on members of the Florida Legislature to support legislation to purchase 60,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee and plan for water storage in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA).

The land purchase proposed in the [bill, SB 10](#) by Sen. Rob Bradley (R, 5), would help alleviate harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries while sending clean, freshwater south to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. Funding for the purchase would come from the Legacy Florida Act, which sets aside dedicated funding from the state's budget for the preservation of water and land resources.

The Everglades provides drinking water to 8 million people. This internationally unique ecosystem is the lifeblood of South Florida's environment, public health and economy – reverberating statewide throughout Florida's tourism-based economy. However, this past year marked one of the worst for Florida's estuaries. The Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers were inundated with polluted releases from Lake Okeechobee while Florida Bay remains starved for more freshwater.

"Florida has a serious and ongoing water crisis," said Cara Capp, national co-chair for the Everglades Coalition and Everglades restoration program manager for the National Parks Conservation Association. "Three estuaries are in peril and there is one solution – send clean water south. We applaud Senator Rob Bradley and Senate President Joe Negron for outlining a path forward with tangible benefits for Florida's estuary communities and America's Everglades. The Everglades Coalition calls on all members of the Florida Legislature and Governor Rick Scott to support this smart and appropriate bill to tackle one of the biggest threats to our state's water."

The EAA Reservoir is not a new idea, but rather is one of the 68 project components authorized in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) in 2000. Currently, project planning for the reservoir is set to begin in 2021. SB 10 proposes to move up that planning timeframe in response to the prolonged state of emergency that plagued South Florida through 2016.

"We believe this is an important and common-sense step in the journey to restore America's Everglades," said Mike Baldwin, state co-chair for the Everglades Coalition and Vice President of the Ding Darling Wildlife Society, the friends group of the J. N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. "By sending clean water south, as outlined in CERP in 2000, it is possible to restore some of the historic River of Grass that was the hallmark of this unique ecosystem. Doing so will benefit the economy, ecology and quality of life for all Floridians."

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**About the Everglades Coalition:** The Everglades Coalition represents more than 60 regional, state, national and international organizations committed to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades. Learn more at [www.evergladescoalition.org](http://www.evergladescoalition.org).