

## Mahoney, Crist Speak to Everglades Coalition Annual Conference

Mahoney cites success of WRDA, lays out vision for economic revitalization for rural Florida

(January 12, 2008)

(Captiva Island, FL)- Congressman Tim Mahoney (FL-16) addressed the Everglades Coalition Annual Conference, the largest annual forum for Everglades conservation and restoration. Governor Charlie Crist offered opening remarks to the conference and Congressman Mahoney told the 300 attendees about his work with Congressman Hastings and Senator Bill Nelson to authorize over \$1.8 billion in local funding for Everglades Restoration. The Congressman laid out his comprehensive plan for the economic development of rural Florida by building a partnership between agriculture and the environmental community.

Mahoney has made Everglades Restoration a top priority since taking office last year and is proud to have been at the forefront of the effort to successfully override the Presidential veto and pass WRDA, the Water Resources Development Act. Passed for the first time since 2000, the WRDA Bill authorized \$1.82 billion for Everglades Restoration. Congressman Mahoney cited the success of the bill's passage, but noted that the job is not finished until funding is approved.

"As Congress moves into 2008, we must stay focused and finish the job. We need to continue to fight for funding to invest in basic research for green technologies for our vehicles and our buildings. We need to protect rural Florida from development by investing in agriculture and we need to restore our rivers and estuaries by fully funding CERP [Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan]," said Congressman Tim Mahoney.

The goal of the annual conference is to raise critical and timely issues for in depth debates in an open forum setting. Senators, Members of Congress, and political figures come to discuss their positions, pledge their support and offer challenges to the community. The conference is attended by decision makers from federal, state, local and tribal governments, agency representatives, stakeholders and a vast array of public and private interests including scientists, educators, contractors, conservationists, the media, students and the general public.

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