

Mahoney Calls on Florida Legislature to Prioritize Everglades Restoration

Reps. Hastings, Klein, Mack, Wasserman-Schultz, Wexler co-sign bipartisan letter

(April 2, 2008)

(Jensen Beach, FL) - Congressman Tim Mahoney (FL-16) issued a letter yesterday calling on the state of Florida to protect the historic federal/state partnership to restore the Everglades. Representatives Alcee Hastings, Ron Klein, Connie Mack, Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, and Robert Wexler co-signed the letter, showing their commitment to a long-term partnership in Everglades restoration.

The Representatives issued this letter in response to the proposal by the Florida State House of Representatives and Senate to cut funding in the State's budget by \$400 million and \$100 million, respectively. Last week, the Florida House Environment and Natural Resources Council unveiled their recommendations which did not include any funding for Florida Forever land acquisition or Everglades restoration. The Senate Appropriations Committee released their budget recommendation which did not include \$100 million for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

"Everglades restoration is both an environmental and economic necessity," said Mahoney. "As we have witnessed, the lack of water hurts our ability to grow our economy. My colleagues and I call on the Governor and Members of the State Legislature to keep funding as we continue our efforts to work with the Senate and President to fully fund CERP."

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) passed by Congress in 2000, committed the State of Florida and the Federal government to become equal partners in Everglades restoration efforts.

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Text of Letter:

April 1, 2008

The Honorable Marco Rubio The Capitol, Suite 420 402 South Monroe Street Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

The Honorable Stan Mayfield The Capitol, Suite 222 402 South Monroe Street Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

The Honorable Ray Sansom The Capitol, Suite 418 402 South Monroe Street Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Sirs:

We write to you today in the spirit of bipartisanship to urge the State of Florida to protect the historic state/federal partnership to restore the Everglades.

Earlier this week, the Florida State House appears to have tried to eliminate Everglades funding, totaling \$400 million, from Florida's budget. In fact, the Florida House Environment and Natural Resources Council unveiled their recommendations which did not include any funding for Florida Forever land acquisition or Everglades restoration.

The state and federal partnership to restore the Everglades is one of the most important environmental and economic initiatives ever undertaken. In the eight years of this historic agreement, the State of Florida has consistently met its commitment. While the federal government has not provided adequate funding during this time, Florida's Congressional Delegation has been outspoken in support of both the partnership and increased federal funding. We believe that if the State of Florida now chooses to stop funding its share of this historic agreement, it will undermine the ability to secure federal funding now and in the future.

At a time when the Chairman of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee is visiting key Everglades' projects and reaffirming Congress' commitment to restoring the Everglades, it would be counterproductive for the Florida House to cut the entire Everglades budget. In recent months, Congress has stepped up its commitment to this historic restoration effort by passing the first Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) in seven years, and has also authorized funding for crucial Everglades projects. Now is the time for the State Legislature and the U.S. Congress to work together to ensure these funds are appropriated so that restoration can continue and succeed.

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), passed by Congress in 2000, committed the State of Florida and the Federal government to a long-term partnership in Everglades restoration. It's vital that this partnership remains in tact.

We urge you to join our bipartisan effort, and work with us to secure the critical state and federal funding to make sure we protect and restore the Everglades for future generations.

Sincerely,

Alcee Hastings

Ron Klein

Connie Mack

Timothy Mahoney

Debbie Wasserman-Schultz

Robert Wexler

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