



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

May 17, 2022

Colonel James Booth
District Commander – Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Subject: Letter of Support for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project

Dear Colonel Booth:

The purpose of this letter is to express the South Florida Water Management District's (District) support for advancing the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP), a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), for Congressional authorization. As the local sponsor, the District has been integral in the planning of the LOWRP by providing technical support and resources throughout its development to support the project's objectives.

The LOWRP Revised Recommended Plan increases water storage in the watershed to improve Lake Okeechobee water levels, improves the quantity and timing of regulatory water releases to the Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie River estuaries, restores freshwater wetlands, and enhances water supply for existing legal users of the Lake Okeechobee Service Area. The Revised Recommended Plan includes two wetland restoration sites totaling approximately 5,900 acres, and up to 55 aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wells installed throughout the watershed.

The District has received \$150 million from the Florida Legislature appropriated to date for the LOWRP. During the 2021 legislative session, the Florida Legislature also passed Senate Bill 2516 to further support the expeditious implementation of the Plan. In 2019, the District initiated activities to advance the ASR well component of the project. The District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) also completed the first interaction of a Science Plan, which provides a framework to address remaining scientific uncertainties about ASR wells and meet state and federal water quality standards.

As ASR wells are a component in providing much needed storage north of Lake Okeechobee, the District made a commitment to invest in ASR well technology and advance this component in partnership with USACE.

The District supports moving forward with LOWRP for Congressional authorization. As requested, attached is a certification of financial capability that affirms our ability to satisfy the obligations of the non-federal sponsor upon execution of a Project Partnership Agreement. The District is proud to partner with the USACE Jacksonville District and

Colonel James Booth
May 17, 2022
Page 2

looks forward to working together with the USACE on this critical component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Drew Bartlett', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Drew Bartlett
Executive Director

Attachment

DB/ec

**NON-FEDERAL SPONSOR'S
SELF-CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CAPABILITY
FOR DECISION DOCUMENTS**

I, Candida Heater, do hereby certify that I am the Division Director, Administrative Services, of the South Florida Water Management District (the "Non-Federal Sponsor"); that I am aware of the financial obligations of the Non-Federal Sponsor for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project Final Revised Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement; and that the Non-Federal Sponsor has the financial capability to satisfy the Non-Federal Sponsor's obligations for that project. I understand that the Government's acceptance of this self-certification shall not be construed as obligating either the Government or the Non-Federal Sponsor to implement a project.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have made and executed this certification this 17 day of
May, 2022.

BY: Candida Heater

TITLE: Division Director, Administrative Services

DATE: 17 May 2022