



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 25, 2014

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon, Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary:

We are writing to express our extreme disappointment with the Army Corps Civil Works Review Board's decision to delay proceeding forward with finalizing the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) and to urge the Corps to reconvene as quickly as possible in order to finalize the CEPP Chief's Report.

The importance of this project to America's Everglades cannot be understated. Every rainy season, the Army Corps sends discharges of nutrient heavy fresh water from Lake Okeechobee out to our coastal estuaries instead of sending the water south to the critical habitats of Everglades National Park that desperately need fresh water. Discharges of nutrient heavy fresh water from Lake Okeechobee have plagued the coastal estuaries and communities of Florida for far too long. These releases contribute to an influx of fresh water harmful to public health, the fragile estuaries, and tourism-based economies of the area. The opposite problem exists south of the lake where fresh water is desperately needed to restore the natural ecosystem and crucial habitats of Everglades National Park. Delaying the approval and construction and implementation of CEPP is harmful to Everglades restoration efforts and to people of south Florida that rely on fresh water for their health and their livelihoods. Time is of the essence in moving forward with this critical Everglades restoration project.


We welcome members of the Review Board to witness first-hand the serious environmental problems that the completion of CEPP will help address, such as the damage that releases from Lake Okeechobee have on the coastal estuaries and the communities that depend on the water quality of their local waterways.

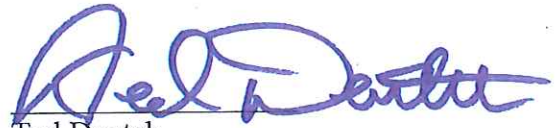
We again urge the Army Corps to move forward as expeditiously as possible. Please provide us with a written response that includes the upcoming dates and schedule for the Army Corps' plans to finalize CEPP.

Sincerely,

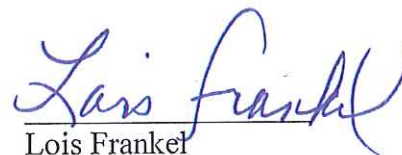

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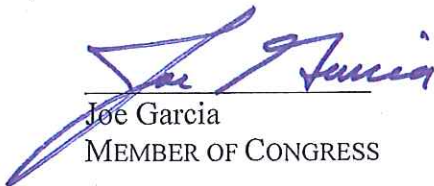

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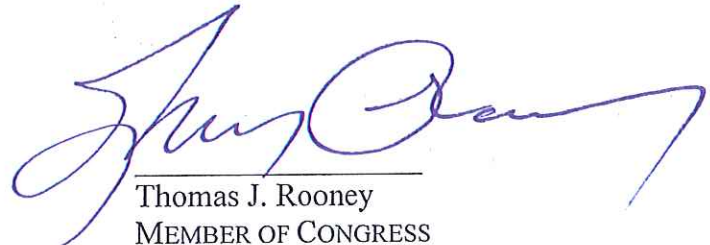

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