



November 10, 2017

The Honorable Thomas Rooney
United States House of Representatives
2160 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Rooney,

On behalf of The Everglades Foundation, thank you for supporting the return to regular order as it pertains to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). WRDA 2014 and 2016 authorized critical Everglades projects that will begin the effort to store, clean and send water south to Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys.

As we look forward to working with you on WRDA, we share your concern with the 2011 earmark moratorium and the effect that it has had on restoration projects like the Everglades.

The Everglades is the source of drinking water for more than 8 million Floridians, and it is an economic engine for our state. The Everglades supports a robust \$8 billion annual recreational fishing economy while supporting more than 440,000 jobs.

As you know, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is the long-term water infrastructure plan that updates the Corp's antiquated flood control system and preserves large quantities of freshwater while ensuring the protection of the water supply for nearly 8 million Floridians. CERP contains a suite of interdependent projects that are eligible for congressional appropriations following authorization. One of those projects is the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (Pacyune Strand).

Picayune Strand was authorized in WRDA 2007 and involves the restoration of natural water flow across 55,000 acres of habitat in western Collier County, an area nearly the size of the District of Columbia. To date, taxpayers have already invested \$600 million, over 90 percent, of the funds required for project that is close to completion. Initial investigations document the resurgence of native vegetation, wading birds, and increased numbers of the highly endangered Florida panthers utilizing this area. Sadly, the Administration's budget did not include any funding toward the completion of this project, and will result in costly and indefinite delays to realizing the benefits of a project so close to completion.

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Today, Congress is powerless to restore funding and see this project through because of the earmark moratorium. Your introduction of H.R. 313 is a common sense, transparent approach to complete water infrastructure projects to benefit the Everglades.

Thank you for your commitment to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades.

Sincerely,

Eric Eikenberg
Chief Executive Officer

Great seeing you in DC!