

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2022

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you finalize your budget request for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23), we respectfully urge you to include robust funding for Everglades restoration to support the expeditious completion of projects that are integral to the success of restoration efforts. Specifically, we ask that you include \$725 million in the FY23 budget proposal under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) construction account for South Florida Ecosystem Restoration (SFER).

The Everglades is the lifeblood of South Florida. Restoration and preservation of America's largest sub-tropical wilderness is vital to the health of the ecosystem, biodiversity, and mitigating climate impacts. A restored Everglades will enhance the carbon sequestration capacity of an ecosystem that spans 3 million acres of freshwater and estuarine wetlands, North America's largest contiguous mangrove forest, and expansive sea-grass beds.

In addition to saving our ecosystem, Everglades restoration directly benefits Florida's communities and economy. The Everglades is the source of drinking water for 9 million Floridians. Restoration of this irreplaceable resource would ensure economic security and a reliable and clean water supply for communities for generations to come. Based on a standard calculation utilized by the USACE, between 65,000-70,000 jobs could be created over the next four years should CERP receive full funding to fulfill authorized construction projects on the integrated delivery schedule.

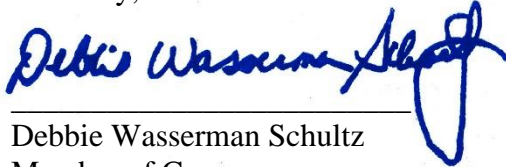
In recent years, severe harmful algal blooms have undermined economic stability in communities whose economies are completely dependent on a clean environment. These environmental disasters related to harmful algal blooms have caused tens of millions of dollars in economic losses in some communities, resulting in lost incomes for workers that threatened their ability to feed their families. These harmful algal blooms underscore the importance of full restoration funding for FY23.

We have achieved significant progress together recently—including more than \$3.2 billion in combined federal and state funding allocated for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) over the past three fiscal years. We must continue to advance projects that remove the barriers to sending water south and restore historic flow paths. To do this, we must provide USACE with the flexibilities they need to fund large scale projects. For example, USACE could fund larger CERP projects by utilizing an incremental funding approach if the Office of

Management and Budget provides USACE with that authority. This could greatly expedite our efforts on critical restoration projects. We urge this critical step to be taken to advance vital Everglades restoration.

For more than twenty years, we have worked together as a community to restore our cherished River of Grass. We must continue to move forward together--with the unified goal of restoring the Everglades and maintaining all of the vibrant communities of Florida. Thank you for your consideration of our request for \$725 million for Everglades restoration in FY23.

Sincerely,



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



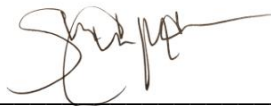
Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



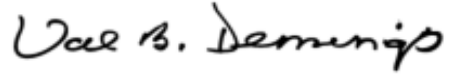
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



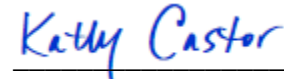
Al Lawson
Member of Congress



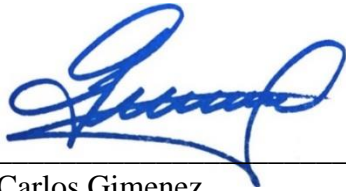
Val Demings
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



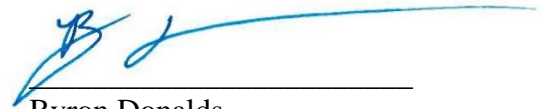
Carlos Gimenez
Member of Congress



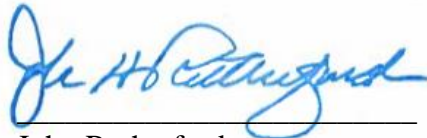
Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



María Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



John Rutherford
Member of Congress



Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress