

March 12, 2020

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development,
and Related Agencies
2362B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development,
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairwoman Kaptur, Chair McCollum, Ranking Member Simpson, and Ranking Member Joyce:

The undersigned recreational fishing and boating community, conservation organizations, and businesses are committed to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades. We appreciate the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies and the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies' long-time support for Everglades restoration and look forward to continuing to work with you to advance vital Everglades and other critical watershed restoration and improvement projects in the FY21 appropriations bills. Together, through robust funding for the programs outlined below, you can play a vital role in ensuring that the Everglades is preserved as a unique ecosystem for all Americans to enjoy.

Last year, Congress made a historical investment to advance Everglades restoration projects, increasing funding to \$200 million. America's sportsmen and women are grateful for the bipartisan support for the Everglades and this landmark investment. However, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration (SFER) will require a steady increase of funding in the coming years order to continue their important work.

In support of this critical program, we request that the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies appropriate no less than \$250 million for SFER by increasing funding to the Corps by \$50 million for construction, an increase consistent with the President's FY21 Budget Request, as well allocating an additional \$10.052 million for operations and maintenance in FY21. This funding level is essential to protecting and advancing the progress that has been made in reducing toxic discharges from Lake Okeechobee into Florida's waterways and to protect the livelihood of anglers, guides, boat captains, and retailers that rely upon Florida's vibrant fisheries and coastal waterways.

Our community also encourages the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to continue their support of these critical restoration efforts. We urge the subcommittee to invest \$6 million for USGS' Greater Everglades Priority Ecosystem Science Program. In FY20, the subcommittee recognized the importance of fully funding this initiative and we encourage you to do so again in the FY21 appropriations package.

Similarly, we request funding for the EPA National Estuary Programs (NEP) of at least \$750,000 to each of the 28 NEPs, an additional \$4 million for the NEPs competitive fund, and \$1.5 million for oversight and administration, for an overall appropriation of \$26.5 million to the National Estuary Programs. The NEPs are designed to build consensus among federal, state, private industry, nonprofits, and citizens of their program areas and help fuel restoration and maintenance of estuaries across the United States, including Florida. Strong funding for this program is not only an investment in the Everglades, but coastal economies and communities across the nation.

We also urge the subcommittee to invest \$4.845 million in the EPA's South Florida Geographic Program. This critical program was funded at this same level in FY20 and we encourage the committee to maintain it as such in this year's bill.

Recreational fishing and boating in Florida has an \$11.5 billion economic impact and supports over 106,000 jobs – the largest in the nation – and the beating heart of that outdoor recreation economy is the Everglades system. Your continued support and commitment to the Everglades will ensure a bright future for Florida's outdoor recreation industry and the millions of anglers and boaters from around the world who visit this iconic and productive location. We look forward to working with you to restore and conserve one of America's most unique and diverse ecosystems.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
Angler Action Foundation
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
Captains for Clean Water
Coastal Conservation Association
Fly Fishers International
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation
International Game Fish Association
Izaak Walton League
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Wildlife Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
Pope & Young Club
Quality Deer Management Association
The Nature Conservancy
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership