

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur  
Chair  
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 Chellie Pingree  
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

Chair Kaptur, Chair Pingree, Ranking Member Simpson, and Ranking Member Joyce:

The undersigned recreational fishing and boating community members, conservation organizations, and maritime and angling businesses are committed protecting and restoring 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 FY22 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 while also helping create green jobs that will put Americans to work as we recover from this unprecedented economic crisis.

Last year, Congress made a historic investment to advance Everglades restoration projects, increasing federal funding for the Army Corps of Engineers' South Florida Ecosystem Restoration (SFER) Program to \$250 million. America's anglers and recreational boaters are grateful for the bipartisan support for the Everglades and this landmark investment, which was a \$50 million increase over FY20 funding.

We now have a unique opportunity to see the biggest ecosystem benefits of Everglades restoration actualized, with some of the largest Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects ready to cross the finish line over the next four years. In order to complete this suite of resilience-building water infrastructure projects and keep pace with state investments, Congress must significantly increase funding for Army Corps Everglades restoration efforts over the coming years. This increased investment will allow the Corps to accelerate construction of already-authorized Everglades restoration projects that will protect drinking water supplies, enhance wildlife habitat, create thousands of jobs, and provide a much-needed boost to Florida's tourism, real estate, and outdoor economy. Additionally, according to the federal government's own estimates, by investing more federal dollars now, it will save American taxpayers over \$2 billion on the overall cost of Everglades restoration.

**To keep pace with state investments, sustain this cost-saving approach, and create conservation-oriented jobs, we request that the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies appropriate no less than \$725 million for SFER as well allocating \$15 million for operations and maintenance in FY22.** Funding SFER at this amount annually from FY22 – FY26 will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to execute contracts for authorized projects on the CERP Integrated Delivery Schedule. These funding levels will not only lead to timely completion of Everglades restoration projects, but it will lead to the creation of over 65,000 jobs, per USACE Jacksonville’s estimates.

Our community also encourages the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to continue their support of critical Everglades restoration efforts. **We urge the subcommittee to increase their investment in USGS’ Greater Everglades Priority Ecosystem Science Program.** In FY21, the subcommittee recognized the importance of fully funding this initiative at \$6 million and we encourage you to increase the support for ecosystem science in the FY22 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.

Recreational fishing and boating in Florida has a \$23.3 billion economic footprint and supports over 92,211 jobs, and the beating heart of that outdoor recreation economy is the Everglades system. Now more than ever, it is critical that we invest in the restoration of this system and, in turn, provide a boost to this unique and vibrant economy. 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 and Wildlife Agencies  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)  
The Billfish Foundation  
Bonefish and Tarpon Trust  
Captains for Clean Water  
Ducks Unlimited  
The Everglades Foundation  
Fly Fishers International  
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation  
International Game Fish Association  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Mississippi River Trust  
National Deer Association  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership