

April 2nd, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development,
and Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development,
and Related Agencies
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
132 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
125 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander, Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Feinstein, and Ranking Member Udall:

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

The undersigned recreational fishing, advocacy, and conservation organizations and businesses are committed to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades. We appreciate the Subcommittee on Energy & Water and the Subcommittee on Interior's 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 FY20. 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 not just anglers, but all Americans, to enjoy.

The Army Corps has made great strides in helping restore Florida's ecosystems, but additional support and funding is necessary to continue their work in improving water quality and, in turn, the health of the Everglades. We request that the Subcommittee on Energy & Water fund the Army Corps for South Florida Ecosystem Restoration at \$200 million for construction and \$10 million for operations and maintenance in FY 2020. This funding level is essential to protect and advance progress 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.

Some of the Everglades' most iconic – and essential – projects fall under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, or CERP. Projects such as the Picayune Strand Restoration, Indian River Lagoon-South, the Broward County Water Preserve Area, and the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands will all be supported through the Subcommittee's investment in South Florida Ecosystem Restoration. The Central Everglades Project, authorized in WRDA 2018, is a key component of the Army Corps' effort to improve water quality levels by providing a retention and treatment system before water is released into Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. This, in turn, will help mitigate the risk of destructive algal blooms that impair and inhibit recreational fishing and devastate Florida's coastal economy, as well as work towards broader water quality and conservation benchmarks.

We also request that the Subcommittee on Interior include three critical authorizations to support continued restoration and protection of the Everglades. In support of ongoing projects to improve water quality and waterway health, we request that the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs receive a collective \$70 million dollars to advance critical infrastructure programs under CERP. In addition, we urge the committee to invest \$3.2 million in the EPA's South Florida Geographic Program. Though the Administration's FY20 budget proposes steep cuts and eliminations for geographic programs, these programs are essential to ensuring clean water flows through Everglades National Park. Similarly, we request funding for the EPA National Estuary Program (NEP) of at least \$700,000 to each of the NEPs and an additional \$1.5M for the NEP competitive program.

The State of Florida has already pledged \$360 million in 2019 to prioritize Everglades restoration projects. Paired with a renewed investment by the Subcommittee on Energy & Water and the Subcommittee on Interior, these critical projects can be realized and the unique ecosystem of the Everglades can be restored and protected for generations to come.

Florida's recreational fishing economy is the largest in the country, and the beating heart of that angling economy is the Everglades system. Your continued support and commitment to the Everglades will ensure a bright future for Florida's outdoor economy and the millions of anglers from around the world who visit, or long to 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

Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)

The Billfish Foundation

Bonefish & Tarpon Trust

Center for Sportfishing Policy

International Game Fish Association

National Marine Manufacturers Association

National Wildlife Federation

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Yamaha Marine Group