



**Florida
Oceanographic
Society**

March 8, 2016

890 NE Ocean Blvd
Stuart, FL 34996-1627
(772) 225-0505
FAX: (772) 225-4725

Governor Rick Scott
Executive Office
400 S Monroe St
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: Resolution to Stop the Discharges and Restore the Everglades

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mark D. Perry

Governor Scott,

Your recent actions on February 11th requesting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to increase the water level of the L29 to 8.5 feet so water could flow to Everglades National Park from WCA 3A, might begin to save the tree islands but it will take months to lower the water level by 1.5 feet to be back on schedule. This will NOT “allow us to move more water from Lake Okeechobee south, relieving pressure from discharges to the Estuaries” as you stated in your February 11th letter.

In your Executive Order # 16-59 declaring a state of emergency for Lee, Martin and St. Lucie Counties you stated that the discharges of harmful water from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Rivers and estuaries are a result of the failure of the Federal budget to adequately maintain the Herbert Hoover Dike. This is INCORRECT and while the Dike is undergoing repair for safety, the discharges to the estuaries would continue and do continue until the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule is changed.

There is no project in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) currently authorized, appropriated or planned that will solve this problem. The State of Florida and Congress must direct the South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to amend CERP to include a “River of Grass” project that would provide enough storage, treatment and movement of water south from Lake Okeechobee to stop the discharges to the Northern Estuaries and restore flow to the Everglades and Florida Bay. You and the State Legislature must uphold the Florida Constitution, Article X, Section 28, and purchase approximately 50,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee in the Everglades Agricultural Area needed for this project.

Many of us have resolved to this course of action as outlined in our attached Resolution dated February 24, 2016. It is time that you, as our Governor, along with our Federal leadership, resolve to get this done.

cc: FL Senator Andy Gardiner
FL Senator Joe Negron
FL Representative Steve Crisafulli
FL Representative Gayle Harrell
US Senator Bill Nelson
US Representative Patrick Murphy
US Representative Curt Clawson
Col. James Kirk, USACOE
Governing Board, SFWMD

Sincerely,

Mark D. Perry
Executive Director

Attachment

To inspire environmental stewardship of Florida's coastal ecosystems through education and research





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Resolution

WHEREAS, prior to 1930 Lake Okeechobee waters would overflow South, and move slowly through the 40-mile wide “River of Grass” Everglades to Florida Bay however the construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike around Lake Okeechobee in 1937 stopped this flow to the South; and

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WHEREAS, the 700,000 acres of land south of the Lake is drained for agriculture, mainly sugar cane, and designated as the Everglades Agricultural Area while the waters in the Lake are now controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers using a Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule that discharges water to the East and West from the Lake into coastal estuaries, the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, instead of South to the Everglades, “River of Grass”; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District continue large volume discharges of polluted, sediment-filled water from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie Estuary, Indian River Lagoon and Caloosahatchee Estuary which have State and Federal protective designations including Aquatic Preserves, Essential Fish Habitat, Outstanding Florida Waters, National Estuary and State Preserve Reefs; and

WHEREAS, these discharges cause devastating impacts to the coastal marine life such as oyster reefs, seagrass beds and nearshore coral reefs and also severely impact the health and welfare of the people and the economies surrounding these vital waterways; and

WHEREAS, the mission of Florida Oceanographic Society is to inspire environmental stewardship of Florida’s coastal ecosystems through education, research and advocacy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Florida Oceanographic Society demands the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District stop the massive, destructive discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie Estuary, Indian River Lagoon and Caloosahatchee Estuary.
2. The Florida Oceanographic Society advocates that the State of Florida and Congress amend the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to include a “River of Grass” project that provides 500,000 acre-feet of water storage south of the Lake in the EAA connecting to 40,000 acres of existing Stormwater Treatment Areas and with a capacity to move 18,000 cubic feet per second of water out of the Lake providing for dynamic, slow movement of clean water from the Lake through the Everglades to Florida Bay in the approximate amount of 1.5 million acre-feet per year.

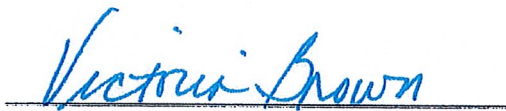
To inspire environmental stewardship of Florida’s coastal ecosystems through education and research



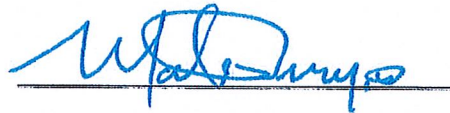
3. The Society advocates that the State of Florida use the funds from the 2014 Amendment 1 Land Acquisition Trust Fund to buy the lands necessary for the "River of Grass" project above stated (2) to provide enough storage, treatment and conveyance of water from Lake Okeechobee south to the Everglades and thereby stopping the destructive discharges of Lake water to the northern coastal estuaries.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the Board Chair of Florida Oceanographic Society authorizes and forwards this Resolution on behalf of Florida Oceanographic Society by signature below.

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED THE 24TH DAY OF February, 2016.



Victoria Brown, Chair, Board of Directors
Florida Oceanographic Society



Mark Perry, Executive Director, Witness
Florida Oceanographic Society