



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
CIVIL WORKS
108 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0108

JUL 26 2016

The Honorable Patrick E. Murphy
United States House of Representatives
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Murphy:


This letter is in response to your letter dated July 19, 2016, urging the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to begin the planning study for the Everglades Agricultural Area. In your letter you stated that planning for water storage north and south of Lake Okeechobee will demonstrate a thoughtful commitment to reducing the devastating discharges and restoring Everglades.

The Corps, in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, is starting two new studies this year. One study northeast and one southwest of Lake Okeechobee may include recommendations for additional water storage capacity projects that could be integrated into the Everglades Restoration program. As you stated, a study of the Everglades Agricultural Area is scheduled to start in 2021 and will investigate opportunities to create water storage areas south of the lake. The Army is prepared to initiate this study quickly, once a non-Federal sponsor for the study is identified.

In the long-term, implementation of the Everglades restoration projects will allow permanent reductions in flows to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee River estuaries by directing more flows to the south. This Administration has invested \$2.4 billion in Everglades restoration, including projects that increase capability to move water south towards Florida Bay. This funding includes \$1.3 billion for projects by the Corps. A critical next step is authorization and implementation of the Central Everglades Planning Project. We have made significant progress on Everglades Restoration and it is critical that we maintain this progress to realize the benefits that will come from moving water south to Everglades National park instead of to the coastal estuaries.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Army Civil Works program.

Very truly yours,


Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)