



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2016

Governor Rick Scott
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

As you are aware, historic El Niño-fueled rainfall during the dry season led the Army Corps to discharge nutrient-laden freshwater from Lake Okeechobee to the estuaries to the east and west of the lake. These nutrient-laden discharges coupled with local basin runoff, high summer temperatures, and extended daylight created an environment allowing toxic, blue-green algae to flourish.

Continued collaboration between federal, state and local stakeholders involved with Everglades restoration projects is imperative to efficiently move these projects forward toward completion and provide relief to our suffering communities and wildlife who call the affected waterways home. We must collectively work on solutions and projects that can mitigate the harmful effects being felt by Florida's residents, businesses, economy, tourism, and our precious ecosystems.

The Army Corps and the South Florida Water Management District are set to start the planning process for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project which includes storage north of the lake. Although planning for storage north of the lake is a positive step towards overall restoration efforts, we urge that the planning for storage south of the lake in the Everglades Agricultural Area scheduled for 2021 be conducted concurrently with the north storage project.

Now that the Army Corps has agreed to accelerate the planning phase, we ask for your support for the South Florida Water Management District to join the effort.

Sincerely,


Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


Alcee L. Hastings
MEMBER OF CONGRESS