



YOUR SUPPORT URGENTLY NEEDED
FOR WATER QUALITY LEGISLATION

Dear COTI Members and Friends,

I want to give you an update on water quality legislation that needs your URGENT support NOW!

Late last year, incoming Florida Senate President Joe Negron announced a legislative proposal to provide for the purchase of 60,000 acres of farmland south of Lake Okeechobee, within the Everglades Agricultural Area, that would be used for construction of a 360,000 acre-feet dynamic water reservoir.

Recently, his proposal has been formulated into two specific bills for the upcoming legislative session: SB10 in the Senate and its companion, HB761, in the House.

The potential benefit of this proposal in terms of alleviating the various water quality and quantity issues in our Caloosahatchee Estuary is significant. The experts estimate that once completed, a reservoir of this size south of the Lake could reduce harmful discharges to both the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie by 50 percent. Additionally, the water entering the reservoir could be eventually treated for removal of nutrients in nearby Stormwater Treatment Areas and sent south to the Everglades and Florida Bay, which are badly in need of non-saline water.

Financing Would Be Challenging

If approved, financing for the project would be challenging. The project would be considered a component of the overall Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP) and thereby subject to 50/50 financing split between Washington and Florida. Using the Amendment 1 funding that the voters of Florida approved in

2014, the land purchase aspect would be financed up to \$100 million annually using state bonds.

These two bills are supported by a number of organizations, including the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation, the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, the Everglades Foundation and Audubon Florida. They are opposed - no surprise - by U.S. Sugar and its political allies.

Call Or Write Key Officials

Given powerful opposition, we need your support. I urge you to please call or write the officials below to express your support for HB761 and SB10:

Rep. Ray Rodriguez
17595 South Tamiami Trail, Ste 218
Fort Myers, FL 33908-4570
Phone: 239-433-6501
ray.rodriquez@myfloridahouse.gov

Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto
2310 First Street, Unit 305
Fort Myers, FL 33901
Phone: 239-338-2570
benacquisto.lizbeth.web@flsenate.gov

Governor Rick Scott
Office of the Governor
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001
Phone: 850-717-9337
Email: [Click Here](#)

You can also use the Audubon Florida link below to support SB10 and save the Everglades. Use the suggested message or personalize it to support the plan and protect our coastal communities!

<https://action.audubon.org/act/tell-your-senator-support-sb10-save-everglades>

SB10 and HB761 represent the best chance we've had in a long time to begin some real progress on these very difficult water problems that represent an existential challenge to our way of life on Sanibel Island.

PLEASE weigh-in on these bills. Your letter, email or phone call WILL make a difference. I encourage you to be an advocate for clean water! We have a VOICE!



Susan Tucker
COTI Environment Committee Chair

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