

I oppose the "buy the land, send the water south" calls to action and do not support the "Now or Neverglades" declaration because it has scientifically been proven that buying additional land south of Lake Okeechobee to build a water storage reservoir is not the answer to achieving clean water flow into Everglades National Park, Florida Bay, and the Florida Keys nor in significantly reducing Lake Okeechobee discharges into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries. The proposed purchase of 60,000 acres of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) to build a reservoir will take billions of dollars away from vital restoration projects that are already scientifically proven and in the works.

I support spending Amendment 1 dollars to expedite the projects and plans outlined in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) to achieve everglades restoration goals, store water, allow more water to be moved south and reduce lake releases.

I support restoring the wetlands system of rivers, lakes, and marshes that make up the Everglades Region with the implementation of CEPP and CERP to create a water system that can simultaneously serve the natural, urban, and agricultural needs of South Florida and will provide clean water to move through the system at the right amounts and at the right times.

I support the facts and massive amount of data provided by the South Florida Water Management District and independent research institutions such as Mote Marine Laboratory and the University of Florida that show the polluted water in the estuaries is 70-80% the result of nutrients entering costal waterways from local sources such as seeping septic tanks and stormwater runoff in both the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries. Only 3% of the water and 4% of the phosphorous entering Lake Okeechobee has come from land south of the lake, further validating the source of lake water should not be blamed on EAA farmers or Lake Okeechobee itself. Data also shows algae blooms in the estuaries have occurred in past years such as 2014 when there were no lake releases.

I support cleaning water up at the source(s), before it enters Lake Okeechobee so that not only will the coastal communities have clean water for drinking, fishing, and tourism, but communities and residents of the Lake Okeechobee Region may also benefit from the tax dollars being spent on water treatment projects that benefit all our water bodies.

I stand behind Everglades Agricultural Area farmers who have proven their commitment to the land over the past 20 years by reducing the amount of phosphorus leaving their farms by an average of 55% per year--which far exceeds the 25% annual reduction required by law. These farmers also provide access to locally grown foods for the nation as well as good jobs for over 12,000 farming families in the Lake Okeechobee Region.

I join the fight to protect the farmers, businesses and approximately 100,000 residents who rely on the communities of the Lake Okeechobee Region for a way of life.