

EVERGLADES TRUST

Defending the everglades
and making polluters pay
since 1994.



September 16, 2013

The Honorable Bill Shuster, Chairman
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster:

We deeply appreciate your combined efforts to get the Water Resources and Reform Development Act (WRRDA) process back on track. We also support your public commitment to place WRRDA on a two-year legislative cycle. This commitment is important to our nation's water resource and infrastructure.

The introduced legislation speaks to a number of critical issues for our nation, including the authorization of essential restoration projects, streamlining the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers planning process and addressing the need for a efficient, cost-savings by the Army Corps by completing critical projects on time.

Our nation's water infrastructure projects are essential to our economic health and to the environment. Indeed, a healthy environment is vital to a sound economy.

We are pleased that HR 3080 includes four Everglades restoration projects. Each of these critical projects have completed Army Corps of Engineers Chief's Reports. These projects, once authorized, will move us into the next phase of the historic Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), a successful partnership between the Congress and the state of Florida.

We also commend your addressing the huge backlog of projects that have been pending without funding for decades.

We had hoped that the legislation would include a means of addressing projects where the Chief's Report still is under consideration, such as the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP). CEPP is an extremely important component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). In fact, CEPP combines several elements of the CERP. The Corps of Engineers and the State have used CEPP as a model to streamline the Corps' planning efforts and would underscore your efforts to expedite Corps planning while maintaining critical environmental safeguards. The planning time has been drastically reduced thus far and would only be delayed by a lack of Congressional authorization.

We are hopeful that CEPP and other projects awaiting near term Chief's Reports will be a part of the final legislation that emerges from the conference committee.

Mr. Chairman and Congressmen, we look forward to working with you to strengthen this legislation as the process moves forward.

We appreciate your many efforts on this bill and those of your excellent staff.

Sincerely,

(Signatures waived in order to expedite delivery.)

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CC:

Honorable Nick Rahall, Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Honorable Bob Gibbs, Chairman, Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Honorable Timothy Bishop, Ranking Member, Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee