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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0916**

July 8, 2011

Colonel Alfred A. Pantano, Jr., District Commander  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Jacksonville District  
701 San Marco Boulevard  
Jacksonville, FL 32207-0019

Dear Colonel Pantano:

I recently learned that there has been another delay in awarding the contract to begin construction on the first phase of the C-44 Reservoir portion of the Indian River Lagoon-South project in Martin County, Florida. I am very concerned about the possible unintended consequences of pushing this project back even further.

As you know, the Indian River Lagoon is the most biologically diverse estuary in North America. Unfortunately, the lagoon has suffered immense damage due to releases from Lake Okeechobee during high water events in the lake. The Indian River Lagoon-South project was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 as a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and will help alleviate the strain on the Lagoon and restore its natural flow and salinity.

This project has been authorized for four years and enjoys unprecedented local support. Martin County has contributed \$50 million to the project, including providing land that will be used for the reservoir. The time to move forward with this contract and construction is now.

This latest delay has me particularly worried as the funds remain “unobligated,” and therefore could be eligible for reallocation to another project. At a time when the federal government is tightening its belt, and working with less, losing these funds would be devastating for this project.

I ask that you award the contract as quickly as possible and do everything within your power to maintain funding for this project. I look forward to working with you as we move forward. Please let me know what actions are being taken to award the contract, what is the current time frame, and what else can be done to ensure this project moves forward in the coming months.

Thank you for your service, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Rooney  
Member of Congress