

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Tom Rooney (R-Fla.) voted today to pass the Fiscal Year 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill Conference Report. The final bill, which allocates over \$180 million to Everglades restoration and other vital projects in South Florida, passed the House with strong bipartisan support.

“This important bill funds essential projects along the Treasure Coast and throughout South Florida. The entire Florida delegation worked tirelessly in a bipartisan effort to secure this funding.” said Rooney. “These projects will not only help save and restore the fragile ecosystem of South Florida, but they will provide much needed jobs to the surrounding communities.”

During his floor statement Rep. Rooney spoke about the projects the bill will fund, but also expressed his frustration with the limited construction funding for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). While this is the first year the Lagoon has received construction dollars, the final bill greatly cut the funding originally provided in the House bill. Rooney was assured by the Energy and Water Appropriations Committee Vice- Chair Ed Pastor from Arizona that the project will not be treated as a “new start” next year and will be eligible for full funding in addition to now being eligible for other federal assistance outside the appropriations process.

Projects in the funding bill include:

\$122,819,000 for the Herbert Hoover Dike: The earthen dike which surrounds Lake Okeechobee has been damaged by decades of storms and erosion. Rooney submitted a request and worked with the Committee to ensure adequate funding for the continued rehabilitation of the Dike.

\$180,064,000 for the South Florida Everglades Ecosystem Restoration: Approximately \$100,000 in construction dollars is designated for the Indian River Lagoon- South (IRL-South) plan which was requested by Rooney. The IRL-South project, authorized in the WRDA 2007 legislation, consists of a series of water treatment and storage structures aimed at cleaning and restoring the Lagoon. This is the first time the IRL has received construction funding.

\$333,000 for the St. Lucie Inlet in Martin County: The Inlet has been undergoing rehabilitation to help improve its safety and navigation. This funding will go towards dredging the inlet to ensure the channel remains navigable.

\$331,000 for the Hutchinson Island shore protection project in Martin County: These funds will assist Martin County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to locate and permit a new sand source for ongoing and future shore protection projects.

\$448,000 St. Lucie County Beach Re-Nourishment Feasibility Study: Rooney requested these funds for this federally authorized project that would fund an ongoing study of the critically eroded beaches in St. Lucie County.

The Senate will now vote on the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill Conference Report.