

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Tom Rooney (R-Fla.) announced today that he has introduced legislation in the House of Representatives to allow the hunting of Burmese Pythons in Everglades National Park. This dangerous species continues to cause significant damage to the native wildlife in Florida's Everglades.

Rooney also announced that he has cosponsored two bills to help combat the infestation of Burmese Pythons and other invasive species into the Everglades. There are an estimated 150,000 Burmese Pythons currently living in the Everglades, along with 196 different non-native breeds of birds, 43 kinds of fish and 30 mammals. This non-native species pose a threat to Everglades' restoration, and the overall survival of the ecosystem. Invasive species cost the U.S. economy an estimated \$100 billion a year and are the 2nd largest threat to endangered species.

The two bills Rooney has cosponsored will help halt the introduction of these dangerous animals into the United States:

- H.R. 669 "Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act" would have the Secretary of the Interior formulate a list or "green list" of nonnative wildlife species approved for importation and a "black list" of nonnative wildlife species that are prohibited. The potential risk to human, other animal species, and environmental health will all be considered when determining whether to "green" or "black" list an animal.
- H.R. 2811 would amend the Lacey Act to include Pythons as dangerous animals. The bill would basically ban the importation of pythons into the United States.

"The survival of the Everglades, and South Florida's entire ecosystem relies on removing and halting the introduction of dangerous non-native wildlife," said Rooney. "The legislation I have introduced and cosponsored is a good start to battling the pythons, and I will continue to work with the National Park Service, the state of Florida, and SFWMD to find ways to eradicate this dangerous invasive species."

Between 2000 and 2004, roughly 65,000 Burmese Pythons were imported into the United States. To date, almost 1,000 Burmese Pythons have been removed from the Everglades. Congressman Rooney is committed to ending the introduction of these dangerous predators and eradicating them from the Everglades.