



May 25, 2017

The Honorable Tom Rooney  
2169 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rooney:

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) strongly supports your efforts to restore Congress' Constitutional authority to direct prioritization and funding of vetted U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) projects.

ASA is the nation's recreational fishing trade association and represents sportfishing manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, and angler advocacy groups, as well as the interests of America's 46 million recreational anglers, over 3 million of whom reside in or frequent Florida. ASA also safeguards and promotes the social, economic, and conservation values of sportfishing in America, which result in a \$115 billion per year impact on the nation's economy. In Florida, the Fishing Capital of the World, this translates into a significant \$9.6 billion economic engine supporting over 128,000 jobs and makes clean waters and abundant fisheries in the State of paramount importance to our industry.

The Everglades is a national treasure and should be restored on its own merits, but equally important is resolving the environmental effects that have resulted from manmade alterations over the years. Restoring the historic southerly flow of clean water from Lake Okeechobee to Florida Bay (Bay) is critical to reducing the necessity for and the frequency of releases to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers as well as for maintaining proper salinity in the Bay. In recent years, these releases have resulted in catastrophic algal blooms and seagrass dieoffs that have dramatically impacted the sportfishing industry in south Florida.

As a result, ASA is committed to expediting the restoration of the historic southern flow of freshwater through the Everglades into Florida Bay and reducing the damaging releases to our coastal estuaries. While the state of Florida has shown its commitment to restoration by establishing significant

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recurring funding and bonding options, its federal partner, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), has been challenged in directing funds to these projects. Currently, Florida is approximately \$1 billion ahead of the federal government in its expenditures on Everglades restoration in an established 50/50 cost share.

The "earmark moratorium" in place since 2011 presents a continuing limitation in advocating for appropriate funds for specific USACE projects, including Everglades restoration and other economically-vital water resources development projects. ASA fully supports your efforts to establish measured and reasonable exceptions to this moratorium to ensure restoration and infrastructure priorities are completed in a timely and expedited manner, in accordance with the will of Congress.

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of the great state of Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kellie Ralston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kellie Ralston  
Florida Fishery Policy Director