

Resolution of the Rivers Coalition June 26, 2008

Whereas, the Rivers Coalition is a 50 member organization of business, environmental and civic groups that represent more than 250,000 citizens from Florida and beyond,

Whereas, the Rivers Coalition formed in 1998 as a result of huge damaging freshwater discharges from Lake Okeechobee that polluted the St. Lucie Estuary and crippled the local economy,

Whereas, the mission of the Rivers Coalition is, **"To fight for a safe, healthy and ecologically balanced St. Lucie River Estuary and Indian River Lagoon, natural resources that are vital to the economy and quality of life of Martin County and the Treasure Coast.**

Whereas, Rivers Coalition has consistently supported sending excess Lake Okeechobee waters away from the estuaries where it tends to do harm and towards the Everglades where more water is needed; and

Whereas, CERP and the Northern Everglades initiatives as currently proposed will not accomplish this to the extent necessary for true environmental restoration; and

Whereas, the proposed public purchase of US Sugar would make enough land available to create the necessary water storage, cleansing and flow capacity south from Lake O to the Everglades; and

Whereas, public ownership of these lands would substantially reduce the need for irrigation storage in Lake O and drainage water quality treatment associated with sugar production on these lands; and

Whereas, the overall potential benefits to the Lake, Estuaries and Everglades are much greater if the US Sugar lands are purchased and converted to public restoration purposes,

Whereas, Governor Crist has reached a landmark agreement in principle to acquire the holdings of US Sugar Corporation by the state of Florida,

Now Therefore Be It Resolved:

The Rivers Coalition strongly supports purchase of US Sugar and conversion of its 187,000 acres of farmland to environmental restoration projects that will restore wetlands, increase the water supply for the Everglades, improve safety for residents of the EAA by enabling a substantial southern outlet between Lake and Everglades, improve Lake health, and better protect the Estuaries from damaging Lake releases.

Be It Further Resolved, The Rivers Coalition urges all the agencies to promptly and effectively collaborate with the public to accomplish these goals.

Adopted by unanimous vote of the Rivers Coalition on June 26, 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leon Abood", written over a horizontal line.

Attested by Leon Abood
Chairman, Rivers Coalition