



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

December 15, 2008

Dear Members of the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board:

Tonight, we find ourselves on the verge of an historic opportunity to protect a unique place, a place where alligators and crocodiles co-exist and where a splendid array of bird habitat can be seen. This land purchase creates unprecedented possibilities for the River of Grass and for our environment. Many people, including Marjory Stoneman Douglas, have looked forward to this day. We are closer than ever to making these dreams a reality and giving this wonderful gift of Everglades restoration to the people of Florida.

Sixty years after President Truman dedicated Everglades National Park, Florida has the opportunity to take a quantum leap forward to move, store, and deliver clean water from Lake Okeechobee south through Everglades National Park to Florida Bay. We can also create a living classroom on the scale of the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone National Park, treasures that have served as teaching tools for generations of teachers and students.

I appreciate the input of the Glades community. My administration remains committed to working with these communities, in particular the City of Clewiston, in the months ahead. I want to offer my support for the consideration of an inland port. As suitable locations are discussed, I am keenly aware of the desire by the City of Clewiston to make this concept a reality.

The historic nature of this moment cannot be lost. I would urge that our focus remain on the long-term benefits of this acquisition. Your decision will have an impact not just for seven years but for the next 700 years and beyond. This effort comes with my steadfast commitment to preserving the Everglades as one of the nation's greatest natural treasures. I urge you to support this historic acquisition. In doing so, you are enabling a better future for Florida, our country and the planet.

I want to thank you for your service as a member of the Governing Board. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of the District staff. Your dedication to the protection of the South Florida ecosystem is vital to Florida's long term success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Charlie Crist