

Bob Janes  
*District One*

September 26, 2008

A. Brian Bigelow  
*District Two*

Ray Judah  
*District Three*

Tammy Hall  
*District Four*

Frank Mann  
*District Five*

Donald D. Stillwell  
*County Manager*

David M. Owen  
*County Attorney*

Diana M. Parker  
*County Hearing Examiner*

The Honorable Eric Buermann, Chairman  
SFWMD Governing Board  
Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P.  
Suite 4000  
Wachovia Financial Center  
200 South Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami, Florida 33131-2398

**SUBJECT: Support for purchase of United States Sugar Corporation**

Dear Chairman Buermann:

The Lee County Board of County Commissioners at its meeting today, September 23rd, has once again unanimously expressed its support to the South Florida Water Management District for its proposed purchase of the US Sugar properties for a flow way. This Board passed a resolution in support of the Governor and the District for the acquisition on August 5, 2008. To that end I am sending you this letter of support, and my own endorsement for your efforts.

Lee County ("the County") understands the need for third party land swaps in order to assemble a critical footprint for the "River of Grass" initiative and a flow-way. However, the County believes it is critical that third party negotiations and land swaps not delay or dilute the U.S. Sugar lands purchase agreement.

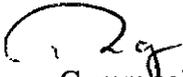
In addition, the County recognizes that water storage and treatment targets are the key issues for estuary protection. Achieving a minimum of 1.5 million acre-feet of storage, along with a million acre feet of treatment, is supported by various studies and analyses conducted to date. Given the widely fluctuating annual rainfall we have endured in recent years, anything less would not be prudent.

Further, the Board understands that the South Florida Water Management District, as part of its statutory mandate under the Northern Everglades and Estuary Protection Act ("NEEPA"), must retain certain lands within the S-4 Basin and the Disston Island Conservancy District for the benefit of the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary. Retaining these lands provides a unique opportunity to realize a critical component of the NEEPA mandated Caloosahatchee Estuary Protection Plan, which is to be presented to the 2009 legislature.

Finally, the purchase does impact our eastern neighboring counties in a way that could be harmful if not adequately recognized. Consequently, Lee County supports releasing for economic development purposes the U.S. Sugar lands and assets that are not deemed critical to the River of Grass initiative or a flow-way, or for the protection of the coastal estuaries. Concurrent with development of these initiatives should be the development of a plan to sustain and expand the economies of those communities adversely impacted by the U.S. Sugar land purchase.

Again, let me state Lee County's support for your efforts. We also wish to express our thanks for the Governor's and District's commitment to think and act "outside of the box" of outdated engineering solutions to ecosystems' problems, which in the past have harmed so much of our estuarine productivity.

Sincerely



Commissioner Ray Judah, District 3  
Chairman

cc: Board of County Commissioners, D1, D2, D4, D5  
Donald D. Stilwell, County Manager  
Wayne Daltry, Smart Growth Director