

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, South Florida Water Management District Board

FROM: Denise Grimsley
State Representative
District 77

DATE: May 7, 2009

SUBJECT: Amended and Restated Agreement for Sale and Purchase and Lease Agreement
– U.S. Sugar, et al.

It is my understanding that you will be meeting during the week of May 11 to consider adopting an Amended Agreement for Sale and Purchase and Lease Agreement with the U.S. Sugar Corporation. The proposed purchase is for 73,000 acres with options to purchase another 107,000 acres around Lake Okeechobee. As elected officials representing the residents and taxpayers of the counties and communities affected by this proposed purchase, we request that the care and diligence that the Governing Board has taken over the last year to consider the needs of the local communities during the deliberation of this transaction continue.

Your actions to date demonstrate your recognition that this historic, once-in-a-lifetime acquisition requires thoughtful and thorough consideration. As you have addressed during your deliberations, it is possible to achieve a transaction that not only provides environmental benefits but provides assurances to the people who live and work in this region that their economy can prosper and diversify as a result of this effort. The proposed agreements, while providing a phased-in purchase rather than an immediate transfer of all U.S. Sugar lands, will affect the local economy by reducing the acreage available for agricultural production in the area. This region already is “at risk” economically and requires continued attention during the transition. We ask that you:

- a) Continue the public participation process to provide an ample opportunity for all to understand the new proposed purchase and lease provisions;
- b) Provide initial and dedicated funding to the Hendry County Economic Development Council to assist in developing and implementing a multi-year economic diversification program to transition the county’s economy as an integral part of the Board’s adoption of this purchase;
- c) Conveyance of lands to the local communities as a part of this transaction to assist in their efforts to improve infrastructure and diversify their economies;
- d) Commit to partnering with these communities and counties to assure achievement of short-term and long-term mutual objectives and goals through the District’s ongoing participation with the communities, business leaders, economists, economic development specialists, and others to promote effective diversification of the regional economy;

- e) Continuation and possible expansion of local District operations facilities within the Hendry/Glades area; and
- f) Continued opportunities to engage local businesses and residents in District capital construction contracts and projects and continued patronage of Hendry/Glades businesses to assist in the economic transition of the region.

The South Florida Water Management District has demonstrated the desire and ability to assist the region in supporting the successful development of economic transition and diversification plans in response to the acquisition of lands from the United States Sugar Corporation. We urge the District to formalize your commitment to the communities at the time that you initiate this historic transition.

Thank you for your service to the State of Florida

Sincerely,

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

Denise Grimsley
State Representative
District 77