



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Executive Office
DEC 11 2008

December 9, 2008

Dale A. Brill, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-001

Dear Dr. Brill:

As you know, Governor Crist announced last June the remarkable opportunity for the South Florida Water Management District to acquire vast lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area for Everglades restoration. After many months, the District's negotiations with the U.S. Sugar Corporation have concluded and the Governing Board is deliberating a proposed purchase contract and lease agreement.

As a part of its public deliberation of the acquisition, the District has shared information regularly with its constituents and has received extensive public participation during its monthly Governing Board proceedings. The Governing Board felt it important to make you aware of the considerable input received from the Glades area communities regarding their strong desire for a defined economic transition strategy to accompany the acquisition. In particular, the leadership and citizens of Hendry, Glades and western Palm Beach have expressed to us their desire for the Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development (OTTED) to continue with the work it began on an economic plan several months ago.

Within its purview, the District has been able to satisfy some of the requests the Glades communities have expressed in relation to the acquisition. As a result of our open dialogue with the communities, the proposed lease with U.S. Sugar sets aside 3,000 acres of land for conveyance to the affected municipalities that could serve to facilitate economic development. In addition, the District identified \$2 million to invest in water quality improvement projects that would provide some immediate benefits.

While these efforts are a step forward, as a water management agency, the District's expertise remains in flood control and environmental restoration. We thought you should know that the Glades area citizens have been asking the District for a status of OTTED's efforts.

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The Governing Board is expected to have a final vote on the acquisition on December 15 and 16, 2008. We invite you or a representative from OTTED to attend to address citizens' questions about OTTED's efforts directly.

Sincerely,



Eric Buermann
Governing Board Chair
South Florida Water Management District

cc: Governor Charlie Crist
Carol Wehle, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District
Michael Sole, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection