

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 8, 2016

Colonel Jason A. Kirk
District Commander
Jacksonville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

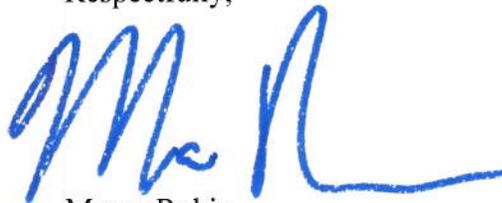
Dear Colonel Kirk:

Florida's coral reef system is unique and essential to the protection of our coastline from storms as well as the habitat it provides for many species of plants and animals. It is this ecosystem that draws fishermen, divers, snorkelers and tourists from all over the world, generating valuable economic dollars to the state's economy, while educating and building awareness to all who encounter the impressive system.

Stakeholders have expressed concerns for the forthcoming Port Everglades project, which is vital to ensuring the port can accommodate larger ships needed for the increase in commerce. Economic growth and protecting habitats do not need to be mutually exclusive. For this reason, I respectfully request assurances that the Army Corps of Engineers is taking the necessary measures to ensure the corals are accounted for and properly protected during the Port Everglades deepening and widening project.

By working with those who have raised these issues, and ensuring their concerns are addressed, the Port Everglades project can move forward without the delays associated with litigation. I thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,



Marco Rubio
United States Senator