

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 9, 2016

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Secretary Darcy,

As the discharges from Lake Okeechobee have been consistent for more than one month, communities on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico continue to reel from its harmful effects. The resulting brown, nutrient-rich waters have negatively impacted our estuaries, raising questions about the future of our valuable and cherished ecosystems. Florida's tourism industry has also seen a decline in various parts of the state due to the release of fresh water. I write to you today as it is clear the harmful discharges will continue for the foreseeable future with a wetter than average year.

While the Congress begins to consider legislation to address Water Resources, I remain committed to authorizing the Central Everglades Planning Project. However, as we focus on the current levels of Lake Okeechobee, concern for the stability of the Herbert Hoover Dike is valid and timely. The risk for breach is exponentially higher with the amount of rainfall the area has already received and with hurricane season fast approaching, that concern is heightened.

Water management is indeed a difficult balancing act that fluctuates from year to year and season to season. Florida's water is also a great resource that is a driver of economic opportunity. As the El Niño weather pattern the State is currently experiencing continues to increase the levels of Lake Okeechobee, and thus discharges, I urge you to consider appropriate and practical ways to alleviate the harmful impacts on the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers and the associated estuaries.

Respectfully,



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator