



# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

October 18, 2012

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary (Civil Works)  
Department of the Army  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Lt. General Thomas P. Bostick  
Chief of Engineers  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy and Lt. General Bostick:

We are writing regarding the health and future of Florida's Apalachicola Bay. Decades of restricted freshwater releases to Apalachicola Bay are taking a heavy toll on the estuary and the economy that depends upon it.

Last month, Governor Scott requested a fishery disaster declaration for Florida's oyster harvesting areas—particularly those in Apalachicola Bay—after assessments found oysters in exceptionally low number and of poor quality. In fact, the current oyster population is the lowest since immediately after Hurricane Elena in 1985. Without a commercial oyster harvest, the fishermen, seafood processors, and their communities do not have work. The oyster industry affects 2,500 jobs in Franklin County, and residents are struggling to pay bills and feed their families.

We understand the Corps restarted its update of the Water Control Manual for the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River System. It is critical that the needs of downstream communities be appropriately prioritized. We will closely monitor the Corps' development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and expect the EIS to evaluate the situation as it is now, and not rely on outdated information or assumptions.

We would also remind the Corps and the Department of the Army of their pledge to remain neutral among the three States involved in ACF issues. The Apalachicola Bay is clearly suffering while Georgia restricts the water supply, yet the Corps has not taken action to remedy the situation.

Please keep us informed of your efforts to help Apalachicola Bay.

Sincerely,