

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

September 26, 2018

The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor  
Miami-Dade County  
Stephen P. Clark Center  
111 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street, 29<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Mayor Gimenez:

In Miami-Dade County, and across the State of Florida, there is no bigger challenge to the long term viability of our communities than the continued degradation of regional water quality. The most ambitious environmental restoration project in human history – the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) – remains the best strategy to meeting this challenge. Everglades restoration efforts are critical to protecting a wetland of national significance, enhancing freshwater deliveries to Florida and Biscayne Bays, ensuring the availability of affordable, clean drinking water sources, and promoting the resilience of neighboring communities for decades to come. As I have personally conveyed to you, advancing the restoration of our Everglades is my top priority for the state in the U.S. Senate. I appreciate the time you and your staff have taken to discuss this matter with me.

Tomorrow, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners is expected to vote on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Development Master Plan that would set conditions for the design and construction of the Kendall Expressway. As you are aware, I am prepared to urge all relevant federal agencies to oppose the construction of any Kendall Expressway alignment that interferes with Everglades restoration efforts. While I understand the frustration that West Kendall residents experience during their daily commutes, we cannot afford any traffic solution that sacrifices a critical \$16 billion federal-state water infrastructure partnership and with it, the region's economic future.

Within the Kendall Parkway project study area, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) have proposed the Bird Drive Basin Conveyance, Seepage Collection and Recharge Concept. This Everglades restoration project is designed to reduce seepage from Everglades National Park, recharge groundwater east of Krome Avenue in the Bird Drive Basin, help attenuate flood levels in the area in concert with the C-4 Emergency Detention Area to the north, and enhance water delivery to the CERP South Dade Conveyance System to the south. Its construction will fulfill the goals of the original Bird Drive Recharge Area project that was previously deemed “not feasible,” and for which the federal government has already purchased significant acreage in the East Bird Drive Basin.

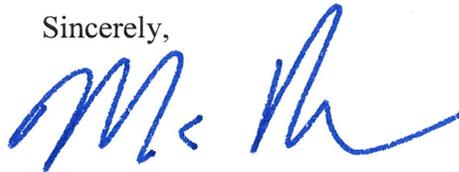
As our staffs have discussed over the last few weeks, the agencies responsible for the design and construction of the Bird Drive Basin Conveyance, Seepage Collection and Recharge

Concept have identified a one-half mile strip of land immediately east of Krome Avenue extending from SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the C-1W Canal – a West Kendall Everglades Buffer – that could prove critical to the success of Everglades restoration. To gain my full support, I respectfully request that any amendments to the Comprehensive Development Master Plan supporting the design and construction of the Kendall Expressway explicitly identify requirements to minimize the proposed alignment’s impacts to, and maximize the proposed alignment’s compatibility with, the Bird Drive Basin Conveyance, Seepage Collection and Recharge Concept.

Additionally, Miami-Dade County and the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority must acquire West Kendall Everglades Buffer lands. These lands can then be used to facilitate land swaps with DOI and SFWMD to advance both the construction of the Bird Drive Basin Conveyance, Seepage Collection and Recharge Concept, and to provide an environmentally-compatible alignment of the Kendall Parkway that preserves the natural character of adjacent preservation areas as well as the current Urban Development Boundary.

Should our county commissioners approve a Kendall Parkway alignment that directly facilitates, rather than hinders, Everglades restoration, I will work steadfastly to bring all relevant federal agencies to the table to collaborate on project design and development. I look forward to tomorrow’s decision from the Board of County Commissioners.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator

CC: Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners  
Chairman Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., District 13  
Vice Chairwoman Audrey M. Edmonson, District 3  
Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan, District 1  
Commissioner Jean Monestime, District 2  
Commissioner Sally A. Heyman, District 4  
Commissioner Eileen Higgins, District 5  
Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, District 6  
Commissioner Xavier L. Suarez, District 7  
Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava, District 8  
Commissioner Dennis C. Moss, District 9  
Commissioner Javier D. Souto, District 10  
Commissioner Joe A. Martinez, District 11  
Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz, District 12