

RESOLUTION NO. 003-2016

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING FOR EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECTS FROM THE STATE'S LAND ACQUISITION TRUST FUND, INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR 2016 FLORIDA HOUSE BILL 989 AND SENATE BILL 1168 THAT SEEK TO DEDICATE \$200 MILLION OR 25% OF THE LAND ACQUISITION TRUST FUND FOR EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECTS.

WHEREAS, the waters of the Florida Keys are connected to and dependent on the Everglades landscape as the primary source of fresh water that serves as the foundation of the nearshore estuarine environment; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County's coast line encompasses Florida Bay, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Everglades National Park; and

WHEREAS, Florida Bay is within the vitally important ecosystem located between the mainland and the Florida Keys, with approximately 20% of Florida Bay within the boundaries of the FKNMS and approximately 80% of Florida Bay within the boundaries of Everglades National Park; and

WHEREAS, the ecological health of the coastal and marine resources of Monroe County is inextricably linked to that of Florida Bay and Everglades National Park; and

WHEREAS, Florida Bay comprises a significant portion of the coastal Everglades recreational fishing industry worth \$880 million annually and commercial shrimp and stone crab fisheries worth more than \$80 million annually; and

WHEREAS, the ecosystem of the Florida Keys, including Florida Bay, attracts over 4 million visitors and over \$4.5 billion in economic activity annually, generating \$192 million in sales tax revenue for the State of Florida each year; and

WHEREAS, the health of Florida Bay is vital to the multi-billion dollar fishing and ecotourism industry of South Florida, including commercial and recreational fishing, snorkeling, diving, boat and equipment rentals, and other related businesses; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida recognizes that the restoration of America's Everglades is critical to the long-term sustainability of South Florida's economy, quality of life, and environment; and

WHEREAS, these restoration projects are funded by the federal and state government with goals of restoring wetlands, ecosystems, national parks and wildlife refuges and protecting threatened and endangered species; and

WHEREAS, lack of freshwater flow, coupled with unseasonably low rainfall over the past year, have led to high salinity in Florida Bay which has contributed to resultant mass seagrass die-offs that may continue to worsen; and

WHEREAS, scientists caution that a harmful algal bloom in Florida Bay is possible as a result of the widespread sea grass decomposition that could lead to further habitat loss for a number of species, a disaster from which it would take many years to recover; and

WHEREAS, the dire situation in Florida Bay is a symptom of a larger water crisis plaguing Florida whereby northern coastal estuaries are being inundated by Lake Okeechobee discharges while the Everglades National Park and Florida Bay are starved for freshwater due to lack of infrastructure for treatment and storage of water and restoration of flow; and

WHEREAS, the fresh water that should contribute to the natural, slow, sheet flow of water through the Everglades to Florida Bay keeping the Bay healthy is instead diverted, upsetting the balance of salinity and creating a poor environment for wildlife and seagrasses;

WHEREAS, the capture, storage, treatment, and conveyance of water southward through the Everglades is critical to restoring and balancing natural water flow, ultimately benefitting the Florida Bay;

WHEREAS, projects in the southern Everglades such as those related to the C-111 canal and CERP “foundational” projects such as the Modified Water Delivery projects most directly impact water flow to, and conditions within, the Florida Bay; and

WHEREAS, the urgent salinity issues in the Florida Bay may warrant that these projects be considered among the priorities for the funding appropriated with this legislation; and

WHEREAS, this bill will direct funding to restoration projects that address water quality and water quantity throughout the Everglades;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida:

1. The above recitals are hereby incorporated into this resolution as restated herein and constitute the legislative findings and intent of the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida.
2. The Board supports an appropriation from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund for the minimum of the lesser of 25% or \$200 million for Everglades restoration projects.

- 3. The Clerk for this Board shall furnish copies of this resolution to Governor Scott, Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli, Senate President Andy Gardiner, House Appropriations Chair Richard Corcoran, Senate Appropriations Chair Tom Lee, House Appropriations Sub-Committee Chair Ben Albritton, Senate Appropriations Sub-Committee Chair Alan Hays, and the legislative delegation for Monroe County as soon as reasonably possible.

- 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida, at a regular meeting of said Board held on the 20th day of January, 2016.

Mayor Heather Carruthers
 Mayor *pro tem* George Neugent
 Commissioner Danny L. Kolhage
 Commissioner David Rice
 Commissioner Sylvia Murphy

YES
YES
YES
YES
YES



AMY HEAVILIN, CLERK

Cheryl Robertson
Deputy Clerk

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: [Signature]
Mayor Heather Carruthers

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
APPROVED AS TO FORM

[Signature]
PEDRO J. MERCADO
ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY

Date 1/19/16