

## **Congressman Francis Rooney (FL-19)**

*House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Testimony*

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The Everglades and Lake Okeechobee Watershed include 16 counties and 164 cities. It has a \$2 trillion economic impact on the state and supports 55% (\$1.3 trillion) of the real estate value in Florida. For every dollar invested in the Everglades/Okeechobee Watershed, \$4 of economic benefit are produced.

Due to a century of human development, the greater Everglades ecosystem is now less than 1/2 of its original size and Lake Okeechobee fills up 6 times faster than it can be drained, resulting in massive discharges into the adjacent rivers and coastal areas. These discharges are untreated, and impact the delicate balance of fresh water/salt water in the coastal ecosystems. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, or CERP, seeks to restore balance to these delicate ecosystems, ultimately reducing harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries and sending clean water south to the marshes of the Everglades and Florida Bay.

CERP was created by Congress and the State of Florida in 2000. It includes 68 projects that will create (1) storage, treatment and flow of water southward into the marshes of the Everglades and Florida Bay; (2) storage and treatment of water entering Lake Okeechobee from the north; and (3) balancing of flows to control salinity levels between wet and dry years. CERP was set up to share costs between the State and the federal government 50/50. As of December 2016, the State had made expenditures of \$2.165 Billion and the federal government had contributed

\$1.26 billion – these figures translate to a 63/37 split overall. So, we have a lot of catching up to do on the federal end of the agreement.

While the bulk of Everglades restoration funding goes to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for construction and maintenance projects, the Department of Interior (DOI) provides significant support for restoration programs, including CERP. The key agencies within the DOI overseeing Everglades restoration efforts are the National Park Service (NPS), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the US Geological Survey (USGS), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Through these agencies, the DOI supports updates to the CERP Programmatic Regulations; the creation of guidance documents for how projects will be built, operated, and evaluated; the establishing of goals to track restoration progress and provide regular status reports to Congress; and for the identification of appropriate quantity, timing, and distribution of water throughout the ecosystem.

While it is no longer possible to directly support these programs through the appropriations process, it is my hope that the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee would approve appropriate levels of funding to the DOI, especially for the NPS, FWS, USGS, and the BIA so that they can continue to move Everglades restoration forward. The following chart shows the trend in funding over the last 7 years for CERP and Non-CERP Everglades restoration funding for both the DOI and the Corps.

**Table: Corps and DOI Funding for Everglades Restoration, FY2010-FY2017**  
**(in thousands of dollars)**

	<b>FY2010</b>	<b>FY2011</b>	<b>FY2012</b>	<b>FY2013</b>	<b>FY2014</b>	<b>FY2015</b>	<b>FY2016</b>	<b>FY2017 Proposed</b>
<b>DOI</b>	<b>79,424</b>	<b>70,600</b>	<b>99,884</b>	<b>66,355</b>	<b>70,452</b>	<b>62,272</b>	<b>64,429</b>	<b>63,000</b>
<i>CERP</i>	<i>8,449</i>	<i>8,401</i>	<i>8,347</i>	<i>7,883</i>	<i>8,376</i>	<i>8,408</i>	<i>7,934</i>	<i>8,000</i>
<i>Non-CERP</i>	<i>70,975</i>	<i>62,199</i>	<i>91,537</i>	<i>58,472</i>	<i>62,076</i>	<i>53,864</i>	<i>56,495</i>	<i>55,000</i>
<b>Corps</b>	<b>167,364</b>	<b>131,066</b>	<b>142,486</b>	<b>96,008</b>	<b>47,616</b>	<b>68,551</b>	<b>94,045</b>	<b>106,000</b>
<i>CERP</i>	<i>119,966</i>	<i>79,860</i>	<i>57,886</i>	<i>76,212</i>	<i>38,499</i>	<i>61,001</i>	<i>69,970</i>	<i>75,000</i>
<i>Non-CERP</i>	<i>47,398</i>	<i>41,108</i>	<i>84,600</i>	<i>19,796</i>	<i>9,117</i>	<i>7,550</i>	<i>24,075</i>	<i>31,000</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>246,788</b>	<b>201,666</b>	<b>242,370</b>	<b>158,683</b>	<b>118,068</b>	<b>130,823</b>	<b>188,000</b>	<b>169,000</b>

**Source:** Congressional Budget Justifications for the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Crosscut Budget Report for FY2015.

I appreciate the Committee's time today. I continue to encourage the Committee to provide sufficient funding for the DOI to carry out its crucial Everglades restoration duties.