

**Rep. Wasserman Schultz**  
**Interior Member Day | Appropriations Committee**  
March 5, 2026 | 5 Minutes

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for holding this Member Day hearing.

I'm here today as a proud Floridian to talk about a few of the many issues that are critical to the Sunshine State in the Interior Appropriations Bill.

I want to start with an easy one, which, you've heard me and my Florida colleagues talk about a lot – the Everglades.

We remain ever united on this, the largest environmental restoration project ever undertaken by the United States.

And our goal is clear: to reverse the decades of damage done to the largest subtropical wetland in the world.

It's exceptionality should not be lost on anyone. The Everglades are the only place where alligators and crocodiles coexist, and its restoration remains one of the most bipartisan issues in my state.

This *River of Grass* is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the first U.S. national park created specifically to protect its biodiversity. And we cannot abandon it.

That's why I respectfully request the highest possible funding for the National Park Service and their operations in the Everglades.

### **<<TRIBAL WORK>>**

In this cycle, that work is also made slightly more complicated by a critical, time sensitive project that we need to complete, which falls under Energy & Water and Interior.

Just a few months ago, President Trump vetoed an overwhelmingly bipartisan bill to designate an additional plot of land as a part of the Miccosukee Reservation.

That area is called the Osceola Camp, and its history predates almost all the cities and towns built around the eastern side of the Everglades.

When the Miccosukee moved to what is today Everglades National Park to survive, they formed temporary camps on tree islands.

The water that flowed through it was a source of food, hydration, and a means of transit.

But the construction of a new major roadway, split their camp and dried up the water the camp relied on, forcing the family to move to a different portion of the camp.

Family members still live, visit, and protect the land where the home of Depot Tiger once stood.

But here is the problem: the Everglades Restoration work we have already authorized and funded is going to restore that waterway, whether the camp is ready for it or not.

The bill the President vetoed included an authorization for the work to protect the camp be done in coordination with the Tribe along with our government agencies.

Protecting this land and the Miccosukees' ability to live there is not an issue that should be subjected to retaliation for unrelated matters.

Our nation has made a commitment to the Miccosukee Tribe and the hundreds of other tribes to protect tribal lands, resources, and sovereignty. I will respectfully urge you to include a provision in the Interior bill that addresses this critical issue and respects our tribal neighbors.

**<<NO QUIT>>**

Mr. Chairman, Madam Ranking Member, I'll be blunt with you – we cannot walk away from addressing this problem.

I hope that we can work together in the spirit of a bipartisan and shared commitment to our Tribes and treaty commitments, and I commit to working with each of you to get this issue fixed.

## <<OIL DRILLING>>

The last issue that I want to raise today, is the issue of Big Cypress Oil Drilling.

It's another bipartisan, commonsense measure that simply says we should not drill in an area of the Everglades – in a national preserve – that the federal government has invested billions of taxpayer dollars to restore.

This is akin to paying for a state-of-the-art fire suppression system, only to start a fire in the kitchen and turn off the water. A report found that Big Cypress National Preserve's famous wetlands have not returned to normal.

The same report detailed not only the water that would be at risk of contamination, but also the countless species of wildlife that would be in harms way too.

We have many tools in the toolbox to protect the environment, compensate the mineral rights holders, and protect our federal investments.

On all these issues I'm excited to work with you both and committee members to achieve real solutions.