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Sustainability Advisory Board  
THE CITY OF KEY WEST

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Dear City Commissioners,

The Sustainability Board of the City of Key West requests your support in championing the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP).

The 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRDA) passed the Senate and House on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and is on way to President for signature. The bill authorizes 4 CERP projects: C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands, Broward County Water Preserve Areas, and the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project. This is great news for the Florida Keys, as our economy is greatly affected by water quality, and our livelihoods rely on the recharging of the aquifers we draw from.

However, on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, one day late, the US Army Corps of Engineers approved the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), a \$2 billion series of engineering projects designed to collect water around Lake Okeechobee, in the center of the Everglades, and channel it south into the rest of the wetlands.

Central Everglades Planning Project activities in general are designed to improve nutrient and dissolved oxygen conditions via reduced high flow events from Lake Okeechobee, improve Lake Okeechobee nutrient levels, and improve estuary basin runoff quality due to implementation of TMDLs for nutrients. The CEPP environmental impact statement does not expect nutrient loading to change significantly, but does expect salinity levels in the estuaries to improve.

Restoring the historic natural fresh water flows to the Everglades is important to stop the decline and start to restore healthy ecosystems to the waters of Florida Bay, the Florida Keys and the Florida Keys Marine sanctuary.

Although WRDA projects are supposed to be authorized every two years, it has been seven years since the last authorization was passed. To that end, the Sustainability Board humbly requests that the City Commission send letters to Sen. Mark Rubio, Sen. Dwight Bullard and Rep. Holly Raschein, requesting their support and leadership to ensure the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) is fully funded.

Sincerely,

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