



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

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SENATOR LIZBETH BENACQUISTO

30th District

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June 7, 2016

Executive Director Pete Antonacci
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Director Antonacci,

On June 9th at your Governing Board Meeting in Lee County, the South Florida Water Management District will be talking about the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project to specifically identify water storage features in the northern watershed to better manage Lake Okeechobee water levels.

Currently, the Governor's 20-Year Plan Integrated Delivery Schedule does not call for identifying water storage south of Lake Okeechobee with the Army Corps of Engineers at this point in the process. Given the level of crisis the Caloosahatchee Estuary faces today we must act immediately to identify areas that can hold water to reduce the harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee. Our community simply cannot wait years to begin the planning process to find additional storage while our ecosystem continues to suffer. We need action now and the people of Southwest Florida deserve answers.

Rather than wait to commence the process, SFWMD should act concurrently with both regions to identify storage opportunities to the south as well as north of the lake. By expediting the process we can reduce the time our estuaries are strained and work rapidly towards long term solutions.

I look forward to hearing from you about how the district intends to identify water storage features south of Lake Okeechobee on an expedited schedule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lizbeth Benacquisto".

Lizbeth Benacquisto
Senate District 30

REPLY TO:

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Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

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