

December 23, 2021

President Joe Biden The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden.

On behalf of the undersigned members of the sportfishing, boating, and greater outdoor industry, we write to you in support of recent bi-partisan congressional letters requesting that your administration allocate at least \$1.5 billion towards turnkey Everglades restoration projects (i.e., the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration program) from funding made available to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) through the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Over four million of the nation's 55 million anglers reside in or frequent Florida as do almost one million registered boat owners, with many of these focusing on the iconic fishing and boating opportunities in the southern part of the state where ongoing water quality impacts have highlighted the need to expedite Everglades restoration activities. In Florida, the Fishing Capital of the World, the sportfishing industry is a \$13.8 billion economic engine supporting almost 120,000 jobs, making clean waters and abundant fisheries of paramount importance to us not only in the state, but nationally. Florida's \$33 billion outdoor recreation economy, driven by fishing, boating, hunting, and other outdoor pursuits, has a robust impact on both jobs and GDP.

With the passage of the IIJA legislation, Congress has provided the USACE with historic funding to improve critical infrastructure and invest in measures to protect against the immediate and future impacts of climate change. Not only does restoring America's Everglades provide an unmatched opportunity to accomplish both goals, but it also will be a banner example of USACE's (and America's) ability to restore the environment on a massive scale and serve as a legacy defining investment for your administration. A generational investment now will undoubtedly be recognized as a galvanizing moment that ensured the future of a national and global treasure.

Passed by the U.S. Congress in 2000, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is a model for shared investment and boasts a 50-50 cost shared program between Washington and Florida. America's Everglades doesn't just impact Florida. Beyond the climate and economic benefits to the country, best practices from Everglades restoration can be harnessed for future ecosystem restoration projects and the completion of Everglades restoration will enhance the prominence and funding potential for needed restoration investment across the country.

America's Everglades has significant momentum, a well-earned track record, and a rewarding future. Everglades restoration is a multi-purpose project with multi-benefit impacts, including restoring critical ecosystems, increasing carbon sequestration capacity, recharging a critical aguifer, providing resilience against storms and salt water intrusion, creating tens of thousands of jobs, and protecting communities and economies that are exceptionally vulnerable to climate change. The Everglades provides drinking water to 9 million Floridians and is home to 78 threatened or endangered species. The Everglades encompasses the tribal lands of two Native American Tribes, includes 14 national wildlife refuges, four national parks (including Everglades National Park - a World Heritage Site). an International Biosphere Reserve, and a Wetland of International Importance.

We also support the bipartisan congressional requests that your FY23 budget fund Everglades restoration at \$725 million to keep on schedule to complete restoration efforts this decade, as originally envisioned when CERP was passed, and to realize an estimated \$2 billion in savings off the overall price tag. As noted in those letters, we believe that supplemental funding from IIJA should be in addition to the federal obligations reflected in the Integrated Delivery Schedule, which should be fulfilled by regular budget requests to Congress and appropriations. Given the dire status of the Everglades ecosystem and the multitude of benefits of restoration, all of this funding is critically needed. USACE has confirmed the ability to carry out \$5 billion worth of projects over the next five years. These investments would accelerate the Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir, a key component that will create synergies across the complex system of Everglades restoration projects as it sends clean water south and reduces damaging discharges to the east and west coasts.

Thank you for your continued support and we urge you to ensure generational funding from bipartisan infrastructure legislation is used for a deserving and historically bipartisan cause - restoring America's Everglades.

Sincerely,

**Daniel Andrews** Co-Founder & Executive Director **Captains For Clean Water** 

Eric Eikenberg Chief Executive Officer The Everglades Foundation

Simon Perkins President The Orvis Company

Jim McDuffie President and CEO **Bonefish and Tarpon Trust**  Chris Edmonston President

**BoatU.S. Foundation** 

Guy Harvey Chairman

**Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation** 

Glenn Hughes President

**American Sportfishing Association** 

David Anderson Partner **Natural Resource Results**  Frank Hugelmeyer President

**National Marine Manufacturers Association** 

Jason Schratwieser President

**International Gamefish Association** 

Jeff Crane
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**Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation** 

Ben Speciale President

Yamaha U.S. Marine Business Unit

Matt Gruhn President

**Marine Retailers Association of the Americas** 

Jeff Angers President

**Center for Sportfishing Policy** 

Pat Murray President

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**AFTCO - American Fishing Tackle Company** 

Al Perkinson Chief Executive Officer **Bailo Sunglasses** 

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