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June 28, 2007

The Honorable Tim Mahoney
United States House of Representatives
1541 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0916

Dear Congressman Mahoney:

As the conference on the Water Resources Development legislation draws to a close, we request you to propose language to the Water Resources Development Act bill that would address the raising of the Tamiami Trail. Here is the language we suggest:

The Conferees direct the Secretary of the Army to develop a recommended plan for modifying the Tamiami Trail to restore natural flows and ecological connectivity through Everglades National Park to Florida Bay and to submit a report to Congress for such plan no later than December 31, 2008. This report shall include an analysis of bridging the Tamiami Trail on a northern alignment that maximizes restoration benefits and minimizes impacts to wetlands.

Earlier this week, the Council on Environmental Quality held a discussion among various stakeholders to discuss current options for completing the Modified Water Deliveries Project and moving forward with modifications to Tamiami Trail. During that meeting, we stressed the importance of restoring the historic, natural, unimpeded water flow through the Everglades, particularly the re-establishment of sheetflow into the Northeast Shark River Slough and out Florida Bay.

We outlined our primary goals as follows:

- Inclusion of a Congressional deadline of December 31, 2008, in the Water Resources Development legislation for the submission of a report to Congress on a project to bridge Tamiami Trail,
- Evaluation of additional bridging, and
- Evaluation a northern alignment along the levee.

The language above would enable those goals to be met.

The restoration of flows through Everglades National Park, including Florida Bay, is long overdue and we recognize the need to expedite the completion of the long delayed Modified

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Waters Delivery Project and to move forward with providing critical benefits to the ecosystem that can only come by modifying Tamiami Trail.

We thank you for your strong support of all aspects of Everglades restoration and we look forward to working with you and your excellent staff.

Sincerely,

(Signatures waived in order to expedite delivery.)

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