



CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM
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Via Facsimile

April 4, 2007

The Honorable Connie Mack
United States House of Representatives
115 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0914

Re: Restoring the Caloosahatchee River: A Legacy for Florida, House Bill 1816

Dear Representative Mack:

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program's Management Conference has reviewed House Bill 1816, entitled, "Restoring the Caloosahatchee River: A Legacy for Florida," amending the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA 2000). The Charlotte Harbor NEP commends both you and your co-sponsors, Rep. Buchanan, Mahoney and Diaz-Balart, for introducing this critical amendment to WRDA 2000, and fully supports the passage, funding and implementation of HB 1816. This legislation will result in a multitude of positive impacts on the natural resources of the Caloosahatchee River and Charlotte Harbor.

The Charlotte Harbor NEP is a partnership program, created by Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, to protect and preserve the Charlotte Harbor estuary, recognized as an estuary of national significance and one of the most productive estuaries in Florida.

Since 1996, the Charlotte Harbor NEP has developed and adopted a *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP) for the estuary and its watershed. This plan was developed utilizing four committees of citizens, scientists, resource managers, industry representatives and policy makers. Our partnership includes, among others, Lee, Polk, Manatee, Sarasota, Hardee, DeSoto, and Charlotte Counties; several cities; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; both Southwest and Central Regional Planning Councils; and both the South and the Southwest Florida Water Management Districts.

The Charlotte Harbor NEP supports improving water quality and estuarine habitat within the tidal Caloosahatchee River corridor. House Bill 1816 is consistent with our CCMP:

Quantifiable Objective WQ-6: Meet or exceed designated water quality standards throughout basins on the Charlotte Harbor NEP study area by the year 2115 with possible exceptions for natural and/or site specific conditions.

Priority Action WQ-E/M: Install or retro fit BMPS as necessary to maintain or improve water quality.

On behalf of the Charlotte Harbor NEP, this letter of support is also being sent to Representative James L. Oberstar, Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, John L. Mica, Florida, Ranking Republican Member, Representatives Buchanan, Mahoney and Diaz-Balart, the bill's co-sponsors, and Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Mel Martinez and Representative Adam Putnam, members of the Charlotte Harbor NEP Legislative Delegation in Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Polk, Hardee and DeSoto Counties.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (239) 338-2556 or at lbeever@swfrpc.org.

Sincerely,



Lisa B. Beaver, PhD, AICP
Director

cc: Senator Bill Nelson
Senator Mel Martinez
Representative James Oberstar, Chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Representative John Mica, Ranking Republican, Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart
Representative Adam Putnam
Representative Tim Mahoney
Representative Vern Buchanan