

outgoing



August 23, 2002

The Honorable Trudi Williams, Chairman
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road, Mail Stop 4420
West Palm Beach, Florida 33416

RE: Draft SFWMD white paper on Reservations of Water for the Environment

Dear Chairman Williams:

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) is a partnership of citizens, elected officials, government officials, resource managers, and resource users working to improve the water quality and ecological integrity of the greater Charlotte Harbor watershed. Our study area extends from Polk County south to Collier County and includes Lemon Bay, Charlotte Harbor, Estero Bay, and their watersheds, a 4400 square mile area.

The CHNEP reviewed the draft white paper entitled "Reservations of Water for the Environment and Assurances for Existing Legal Sources Consistent with Federal and State Law." **We request that the white paper be modified to include the Caloosahatchee estuary and Estero Bay as legal source user basins for environmental purposes.** Prior to December 2000, the CHNEP published several reports documenting the dependence of fish and wildlife resources on freshwater flows to the Caloosahatchee estuary and Estero Bay. Many of the sources of this information are from the excellent scientific work of the South Florida Water Management District. We expect that Figure 3 and its associated table on page 16 would be amended for the final paper to include Caloosahatchee estuary and Estero Bay. Following adoption of the white paper, we also request that a statutory or pre-CERP reservation be developed for the Caloosahatchee estuary and for Estero Bay.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact our director, Lisa B. Beever at 239-995-1777 or me at 239-332-6975.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Cantrell
Co-Chairman, Policy Committee
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

cc: SFWMD Governing Board members and Executive Director
CHNEP Management Conference