

February 24, 2005

Governor Jeb Bush  
Executive Office of the Governor  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Bush:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Rivers Coalition regarding the federal funding of the Indian River Lagoon Plan. We need your help!

As you know, the Rivers Coalition formed in 1998 in response to the economic and environmental disasters caused by the massive discharges of polluted water from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie Estuary. The Rivers Coalition now represents over 100,000 Floridians through 32 member organizations.

During the past seven years, the citizens of Martin County have done everything we could to support the agencies in the development and promotion of the plan. We even taxed ourselves and raised over \$50,000,000 to help pay for our share. We were told by the agencies we are the “perfect partners” for this project, that we are the “poster child” for CERP and the prime example of what can be accomplished when local government and citizens work closely with the local, state and federal agencies. We have been told that because of everything we have done, the IRL-South is a great project and will be the first CERP component started.

As each year passes without federal funding, state officials are reaching for ways to start some of the CERP projects to address the state’s rapidly growing population, rapidly deteriorating environment and rapidly rising real estate prices. Your Acceler8 plan helps us with an important component of the IRL-South plan, the C-44 RaSTA, but that is but one of the many needed components, which due to rising land prices, prices could be slipping out of our reach. After everything we have done to support the process, we now find ourselves competing with other “fast tracked” projects in CERP. We need more federal dollars.

Please Governor Bush, we ask that you help us with all the power of your office to promote federal funding of the IRL Plan. Protecting the environment is vital for our economic sustainability. As a region, we can no longer rely on an antiquated flood control system to protect the future of our state’s most precious resource, its citizens.

Sincerely,

Leon Abood  
Chairman