



P.O. Box 2627, Stuart, FL 34995

772-225-6849

March 2, 2010

Patrick Rooney  
South Florida Water Management District  
3301 Gun Club Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Re: Support for extending the closing deadline for the River of Grass purchase

Dear Mr. Rooney,

On behalf of The Rivers Coalition, I write to re-affirm our unanimous support for pursuing the River of Grass acquisition. As you may know, The Rivers Coalition is an organization of business, environmental and civic groups representing over 300,000 individuals. We formed in the spring of 1998 in response to the environmental and economic damage to the Treasure Coast as a result of the huge discharges from Lake Okeechobee. We believe that the acquisition is critical to restoring the health of our waterways which is essential to the long term economic sustainability of our area as well as ensuring that the future of south Florida's water supplies are protected. Specifically, we recommend that you extend the closing deadline for the purchase, to allow needed time to settle outstanding issues.

Our members have been active in Everglades, Okeechobee, and Estuary Restoration activities for decades, and more recently in the Phase I planning exercise for the River of Grass project. These experiences have led us to conclude that the acquisition is indispensable to ultimate success and without it; the system will not perform to an acceptable level of service.

We recognize that extending the deadline is only one step toward finishing the acquisition, and acquisition the first step in building projects, but without the land, the other options are not possible. We look forward to working with you, our local governments, and the legislature, to succeed in the many important steps to come.

Thank you for your devotion to South Florida.

Sincerely,

Leon Abood, Chairman  
Rivers Coalition

[www.RiversCoalition.org](http://www.RiversCoalition.org)