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**RIVERS COALITION RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING EAA LAND ACQUISITION**

WHEREAS, the Florida Everglades and its associated estuaries are an internationally unique ecosystem, a national treasure and a significant economic driver for Florida's economy; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Florida and Martin County, in overwhelming majority, voted to support the Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative, Amendment 1; and

WHEREAS, additional land is needed to store water during the rainy season and eliminate harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers and provide water supply for the natural system; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of approximately 46,800 acres in the EAA, which was included as part of the option lands under the 2008 "River of Grass" plan, embodies the intent of Amendment 1; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District has the opportunity through a legal option to purchase a 26,100-acre parcel of land, a part of the broader 46,800 acres, optimally located south of Lake Okeechobee, which can provide a cost effective water storage solution to help solve Florida's water crisis; and

WHEREAS, acquisition of these key parcels increases water storage capacity; reduces harmful freshwater discharges from Lake Okeechobee; improves the delivery of cleaner water to the Everglades; protects water supply interests; and supports a healthier ecological environment for Lake Okeechobee and the associated estuaries; and

WHEREAS, time is of the essence as the 26,100-acre parcel, is part of the broader US Sugar lands, whose option contract to purchase expires on October 12, 2015;

Therefore be it resolved:

The Rivers Coalition, representing 74 member organizations and over 300,000 Floridians, hereby overwhelmingly endorses and strongly urges Governor Rick Scott, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, to exercise the current option to acquire the remaining 48,000 acres of land for Everglades restoration and further urges the State of Florida to identify the funds necessary for purchase.

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 10th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2015

Attested by Leon Abood, Chairman, Rivers Coalition