



OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY

100 SW 5th Avenue
Okeechobee, Florida 34974-4221

(863) 763-9460

FAX: (863) 467-4335

November 26, 2014

Ms. Lisa Kiefel, Planning Portfolio Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW.
Attn: CECW-CE
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Ms. Kiefel:

I am writing in response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers request for proposals in accordance with Section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014). On behalf of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida, I am submitting a project for consideration.

I respectfully request the Army Corps to conduct a feasibility study, which we believe would support a viable public utility infrastructure project that will protect the Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystems and provide for the health and safety of residents and visitors in the Lake Okeechobee Region. The Okeechobee Utility Authority would act as the non-Federal sponsor for this project.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

This project will directly support the Everglades/Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts. More specifically, since the project is designed to remove nutrients and bacteria, water quality impacts from the septic tank/package treatment plant discharges will be removed. These nutrient rich discharges lead to excessive growth of emergent and submerged plants such as cattails and noxious blue-green algae, to name a few.

With the removal of these excessively elevated nutrients to the aquatic ecosystem, overall water quality will improve in the receiving body. Water clarity will improve which in turn will allow for native submerged plants (i.e., southern naiad, muskgrass, peppergrass and tapegrass) to thrive, thereby providing cover for marine species and a dependable food source for others.

In addition, this project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, and Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem system a priority.

This project has the direct support of Okeechobee County and the City of Okeechobee, Florida Department of Environmental Protection as well as the South Florida Water Management District are all aware of the project.

The total cost for this project is approximately \$19,000,000. The Okeechobee Utility Authority has the financial ability to provide up to 50% for this project.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. We look forward to discussing it with you further. If you have any questions for us, please contact our Washington consultant, Jim Davenport at 703-841-0626, or the Okeechobee Utility Authority Executive Director, John Hayford at 863-763-9460.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Hayford', written in a cursive style.

John F. Hayford, P.E.
Executive Director
Okeechobee Utility Authority

Board of County Commissioners

Okeechobee County



304 NW 2nd Street-Room123
Okeechobee, FL 34972
(863)763-6441 x1

November 24, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman
Okeechobee Utility Authority
100 SW 5th Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34974

RE: Water Resource & Development Act Grant

Dear Chairman Clay:

The Okeechobee Board of County Commissioners is pleased to submit this letter of support, on behalf of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, regarding the Water Resources Reform & Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014) for removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks in the Treasure Island area of the Taylor Creek Watershed.

Sincerely,

Bryant H. Culpepper
1st Vice Chairman – District 2

Vacant District 1	Bryant H. Culpepper District 2	Frank Irby District 3	Terry Burroughs District 4	Margaret Garrard Helton District 5
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