



**FloridaRealtors®**

The Voice for Real Estate® in Florida

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Colonel Andrew Kelly  
District Commander  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District  
701 San Marco Boulevard  
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Dear Colonel Kelly,

On behalf of Florida Realtors®, the state's largest professional trade association representing more than 200,000 REALTORS® in 51 local boards/associations, we write to lend our support for an equitable water control plan for Lake Okeechobee that prioritizes restoring the natural flow of water south to the Everglades and avoids harmful discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries.

Florida Realtors® is dedicated to balancing property rights and protecting the natural resources that make our state a desirable place to live, work, and visit. In 2015, we published a report providing evidence that water quality influences residential property values. With just one foot of increased water clarity from improved water quality in the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, residential property values would increase by almost \$1 billion in Martin County and Lee County alone. Yet every summer, these communities wait to learn of a fate they cannot choose for themselves.

Restoring the natural flow of water south through the Everglades provides a greater probability of limiting these harmful summertime discharges, recharges the Biscayne Aquifer that supplies water to south Florida's growing population, and helps improve the salinity levels in Florida Bay and the health of our world-class fisheries.

Florida has built a great deal of momentum in Everglades restoration through state leadership, increased state funding, and expedited projects such as the Stormwater Treatment Area component of the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir Project. We ask that you adopt the plan that builds on this momentum and puts to good use the investment that Floridians continue to make for the health and vitality of our precious resources.

We thank you for your efforts to develop an equitable management plan for Lake Okeechobee and the opportunity to provide comments.

Regards,

Cheryl Lambert  
2021 President  
Florida Realtors®

Margy Grant  
CEO  
Florida Realtors®



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