



# SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

May 10, 2018

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite  
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

**Subject: Federal Funding Request for Operations, Maintenance, Repair,  
Replacement and Rehabilitation Costs**

Dear Lieutenant General Semonite:

I write to inform you of a situation that is of great concern to South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), your partner in flood protection and Everglades restoration. As you know, our project partnership agreements and federal statutes require the SFWMD and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to share the costs for the operations, maintenance, repair, replacement and rehabilitation (OMRR&R) of projects within the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Program (SFER Program). However, starting in FY2016, the USACE has not requested adequate budget to pay its share of the annual OMRR&R costs. Actions, such as these, give our Governing Board and the citizens of south Florida the impression that the Federal government is not committed to our partnership.

Over the past 25 years, the SFWMD has partnered with the USACE on numerous projects in reliance on the USACE commitment to honor its contractual commitments and pay the required federal cost-share for OMRR&R. In the Master Agreement for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), which governs every CERP project, the USACE and SFWMD agreed to annually update a Five-Year OMRR&R Plan and to use that plan to develop annual budget requests. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the USACE is using the plan in its federal budget development process.

Starting in FY2017, it appears that the USACE effectively zeroed out its budget request for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration (SFER) Program OMRR&R. Based on the enacted FY2018 budget and the President's Budget for FY2019, we estimate a total deficit in Federal OMRR&R funding of \$25.9 million:

- Unpaid federal share for routine OMRR&R (FY2016 - FY2018) = \$ 2.5M
- Projected federal share for routine OMRR&R (FY2018 - FY2019) = \$ 10.3M
- Unpaid federal share for pump station depreciation (FY2016 - FY2018) = \$ 9.0M
- Projected federal share for pump station depreciation (FY2019) = \$ 4.1M
- Projected federal share for OMRR&R and pump station depreciation (FY2020 through FY2028) = \$101.6M

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I bring this funding concern to your attention, along with a request for immediate aid in changing the current philosophy of the federal budget prioritization process in a manner that honors our partnership and the cost-share commitments made under our partnership agreements.

I respectfully request that the USACE pay the past obligations owed to the SFWMD, adjust its budgets for FY2018 and FY2019 to pay the federal share of costs and responsibly budget for future year OMRR&R expenditures so we can maintain the shared responsibility for level of flood protection and environmental restoration we committed to when we sought approval from Congress on behalf of state and federal taxpayers.

Sincerely,



Dan O'Keefe  
Governing Board Member

DOK/mj

c: Brigadier General Diana M. Holland, South Atlantic Division  
Colonel Jason A. Kirk, Jacksonville District  
Lt. Colonel Jennifer Reynolds, Jacksonville District