

TOWN OF DAVIE
TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM/PHONE: Gary P. Shimun, Town Administrator

PREPARED BY: Russell C. Muniz, CMC, Town Clerk

SUBJECT: Resolution

AFFECTED DISTRICT: Town-Wide

ITEM REQUEST: **Schedule for Council Meeting**

TITLE OF AGENDA ITEM: SUPPORT - A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF DAVIE SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST AND THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TO ACQUIRE LAND SOUTH OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF AMERICA'S EVERGLADES AND FLORIDA'S COASTAL ESTUARIES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

REPORT IN BRIEF: In June of 2008, the South Florida Water Management District signed an agreement indicating intent to acquire 187,000 acres of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area, from the United States Sugar Corporation. The intent of the acquisition is to restore a historical connection between Lake Okeechobee and the remnant southern Everglades ecosystem through a managed system of water storage and water quality treatment.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS: N/A

CONCURRENCES: N/A

FISCAL IMPACT: not applicable

Has request been budgeted? n/a

RECOMMENDATION(S): Motion to approve the resolution.

Attachment(s): Resolution

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF DAVIE SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST AND THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TO ACQUIRE LAND SOUTH OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF AMERICA'S EVERGLADES AND FLORIDA'S COASTAL ESTUARIES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, America's Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem is a unique expanse of habitats, whose environmental health is critical to the economy and quality of life of South Florida; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2008, Governor Charlie Crist unveiled a momentous strategy to bring about the largest environmental land acquisition in Florida's history and restore America's Everglades in a way never before anticipated; and

WHEREAS, the Governor announced that the South Florida Water Management District will begin negotiating an agreement with United States Sugar Corporation to purchase nearly 300 square miles of land spanning four counties in South Florida; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of as much as 187,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee would provide the "missing link" needed to better protect the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries, and revive, restore and preserve one of America's greatest natural treasures – the Everglades; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District and United States Sugar Corporation signed a "Statement of Principles" that provides the framework for the potential acquisition of property and assets; and

WHEREAS, through successful negotiations and strategic land swaps, vast tracts would be used to reestablish a part of the historic connection between Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades through a managed system of storage and treatment; and

WHEREAS, dedicating significantly more land in the Everglades Agricultural Area to restoration will build upon and enhance the 30-year state-federal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, offering the opportunity and flexibility to store and clean water on a scale never before contemplated; and

WHEREAS, benefits from the land acquisition include huge increases in the availability of water storage, significantly reducing the potential for harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida's coastal rivers and estuaries; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition will prevent thousands of tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades every year and eliminate the need for "back-pumping" water into Lake Okeechobee; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition also provides the potential opportunity to sustain remaining agriculture in the region by eliminating environmental concerns; enhancing the availability of water supply; and fostering green energy production; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has identified the State of Florida's Rural Economic Development Initiative as a resource for working with United States Sugar Corporation, local governments, area businesses, state agencies and the South Florida Water Management District on an economic transition plan for the area; and

WHEREAS, saving the Everglades and protecting Florida's coastal estuaries is an environmental priority for the Town of Davie; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District's initiative to purchase 187,000 acres of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area is a watershed event for restoring a beloved national treasure – the Everglades.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF DAVIE, FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. The Town of Davie applauds and supports the landmark efforts of Governor Charlie Crist and the South Florida Water Management District to negotiate the acquisition of significant lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area for the purposes of restoring and protecting the northern and southern Everglades and Florida's coastal estuaries.

SECTION 2. The Town Clerk is hereby directed to provide copies of this resolution to the Broward County Legislative Delegation, Senate President Ken Pruitt, House Speaker Marco Rubio, and Governor Charlie Crist.

SECTION 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage and adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2008

Mayor

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

APPROVED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2008

June 24, 2008



just the
FACTS

This fact sheet is provided as a reference to encourage a greater understanding of the various issues related to managing water in south Florida.

REVIVING THE RIVER OF GRASS

Witnessed by Governor Charlie Crist, the South Florida Water Management District and United States Sugar Corporation signed a "Statement of Principles" regarding the proposed acquisition of up to 187,000 acres of land and other company assets located in the Everglades Agricultural Area. When finalized, this historic real estate transaction will provide water managers with the unprecedented opportunity to store and treat water on a scale never before envisioned for the benefit of the Everglades ecosystem.

"Statement of Principles" Summary

Provides a non-binding framework to acquire property for the protection of Florida's coastal estuaries and the restoration of the Everglades.

US Sugar will sell its interest in real property (up to 187,000 acres of lands, buildings/facilities and railroads) and other tangible personal property used in the course of business operations.

Subject to independent appraisals, the South Florida Water Management District will buy the lands and assets for \$1.75 billion using cash and Certificates of Participation to finance the acquisition.

As part of the conveyance proposal, US Sugar will retain use and possession for six years.

The parties will negotiate and execute a detailed purchase agreement with a targeted closing date of November 30, 2008. The final purchase agreement may include third party exchanges of portions of the lands and/or assets.

Acquisition Benefits

Provides an opportunity to reestablish an historical connection between Lake Okeechobee and the remnant southern Everglades ecosystem through a massive, managed system of water storage and water quality treatment.

Allows for the delivery of cleaner water to the Everglades during dry times and greater water storage to protect the natural system during wet years.

Significantly reduces the potential for harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries.

Potentially prevents thousands of tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades every year.

Eliminates the need for "back-pumping" water into Lake Okeechobee from the Everglades Agricultural Area to augment water supply needs.

Provides additional water storage alternatives, relieving some pressures on the Herbert Hoover Dike while the federal government undertakes repairs.

Sustainability of agriculture and green energy production.

Integration with On-going Restoration

Acquiring the "missing link" is expected to build upon and enhance the State-Federal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan and the State's Northern Everglades program.

The vast acreage may now present opportunities for storage and treatment not originally considered feasible in previous restoration plans.

The District will present to the Governing Board for consideration and public discussion options for the future use of the agricultural lands, funding considerations and the effect of the purchase on the schedule and completion of existing restoration projects.



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