

Meeting with Secretary Vinyard – Florida DEP

Summary:

The Secretary was looking for “singles” rather than “home runs” as actions to resolve the problems our area has been having regarding water flows.

We indicated our municipalities have been speaking with one voice both in Washington, DC as well as in Tallahassee, which he appreciated.

It was stressed all stakeholders, both industries as well as east coast – west coast have to work together.

The economics of the tourism business, essential to our local economy, were highlighted. \$3 B in Lee County last year; \$4 including Collier. 85,000 jobs. In addition, in Lee County, 22% of the \$3, or \$600MM, is from outside the US - significant to our national economy.

Projects for immediate consideration discussed included:

Use of lands for water storage:

- Babcock Ranch

- Lands in the Kissimmee, Lake Okeechobee, and Caloosahatchee basins

- Lykes/Bassinger Groove flood plain storage

- Alico (75,000 ac)

Restoration Project

- Lake Hicpochee - \$40 MM needed from State to complete second take down of option

Other Revenue Needed

- Senator Benacquisto’s request for the State to fund C-43 with \$15MM

USAC:

- Revisit Lake Okeechobee Release Schedule (LORS2008) risk assessment

Actions:

Each municipality consider a letter and resolution to be sent to Senator Nelson requesting relief under Appendix A to use C 43 land for temporary storage. James Evans of Sanibel to provide wording.

Support these actions through Florida League of Cities

Continue to lobby for appropriations of WRDA in Washington, DC

In Attendance:

Secretary Vinyard, Florida DEP

Mitch Hutchcraft, SFWMD, Governing Board

Kendra Parson, Communications Director, Florida DEP

Marnie Sawicki, Mayor, Cape Coral

James Evans, Natural Resource Director Sanibel

Alan Mandel, Town Council Fort Myers Beach