

RESOLUTION 15-07

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE PURCHASE OF LANDS SOUTH OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE FOR THE PURPOSE OF WATER STORAGE, TREATMENT AND CONVEYANCE SOUTH INTO THE EVERGLADES TO REDUCE DAMAGING FRESHWATER FLOWS TO THE CALOOSAHATCHEE AND ST. LUCIE ESTUARIES AND URGING THE STATE OF FLORIDA TO EXERCISE ITS LEGAL OPTION TO PURCHASE 46,800 ACRES OF LAND FROM THE U.S. SUGAR CORPORATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE EAA RESERVOIR; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Florida Everglades and its coastal estuaries are an internationally unique ecosystem, a national treasure and a significant economic driver for Florida's economy; and

WHEREAS, restoration of this Greater Everglades ecosystem is vital to Florida's future by protecting Florida's environment, economy, and drinking water supplies; and

WHEREAS, the citizens and taxpayers of Florida and Lee County voted in overwhelming majority to support the Florida Water and Land Legacy Constitutional Amendment, known as Amendment 1 for the purpose of land acquisition and Everglades restoration; and

WHEREAS, excess water from the greater Everglades ecosystem is discharged to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers and estuaries causing catastrophic impacts to the marine ecosystem and local economies; and

WHEREAS, scientific studies and reviews over the past 20 years including the Restudy, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), National Academy of Sciences reviews, and most recently the 2015 University of Florida Water Institute Report all find that additional land is needed south of Lake Okeechobee to capture and store water during the rainy season to eliminate harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers, to treat and provide a water supply for the Everglades and Biscayne aquifer; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida has the opportunity through a legally binding option to purchase 46,800 acres of land, which includes a 26,100 acre parcel optimally located south of Lake Okeechobee, which can provide a cost effective water storage solution for the Everglades and estuaries; and

WHEREAS, acquisition of this land provides benefits to multiple systems that will increase water storage and treatment capacity; reduce harmful freshwater discharges from Lake

Okeechobee; improve the delivery of clean water to the Everglades; protect water supply interests; support a healthier ecological environment for Lake Okeechobee and the coastal estuaries; reduce pressure on the Herbert Hoover Dike benefiting communities around the Lake; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of this land is one of the only projects that will provide a solution for the catastrophic high flow impacts that devastate our estuaries and coastal economies; and

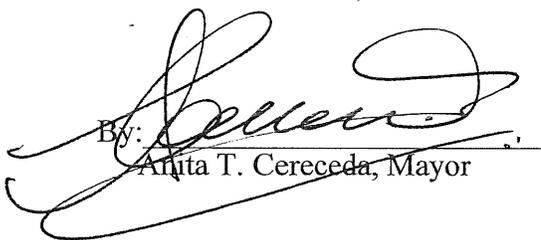
WHEREAS, time is of the essence as the contract to purchase 46,800 acres expires on October 12, 2015.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Town of Fort Myers Beach, Florida:

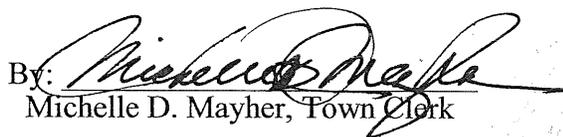
SECTION 1. The Fort Myers Beach Town Council, on behalf of the Town of Fort Myers Beach and its citizens, hereby registers its strong support for the acquisition of lands south of Lake Okeechobee and urges the State of Florida to exercise its option to purchase 46,800 acres of land within the Everglades Agricultural Area from the U.S. Sugar Corporation to help restore freshwater flows to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries. The Town Clerk is hereby directed to provide a copy of this resolution to the members of the local legislative delegation, the President of the Florida Senate, the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, the State Association of Counties, the Florida League of Cities, the Florida League of Mayors, and the Mayors of each city within Lee County, Florida.

SECTION 2. Effective Date.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

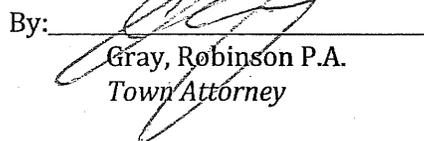
By: 
Anita T. Cereceda, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: 
Michelle D. Mayher, Town Clerk



Approved as to legal sufficiency:

By: 
Gray, Robinson P.A.
Town Attorney

April 10, 2015
Date