

June 26, 2012

Re: Everglades Restoration

Dear Floridians,

The Rivers Coalition Defense Fund has urgently requested all elected officials to support a flowway between Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades so that clean and continuous water supply south is guaranteed, and excess water can move naturally again to the Everglades rather than be shunted east and west to the coastal estuaries, where it wreaks havoc in wet years.

Unfortunately, the Sugar Industry, using its drained Glades, does not want a flowway. Selling land to the public for a flowway would decrease the cane growers' bountiful profits.

We urged Florida Senators Nelson and Rubio to vote against continuing the federal sugar subsidies. Both failed to oppose the handouts, causing consumers in the United States to pay far more than the world price for sugar, at the expense of taxpayers, American jobs, and the environment of South Florida. Kudos to the Senators who called this part of the Farm Bill what it is: riches to a few at the expense of the rest of us.

The Sugar industry enjoys guaranteed profits, perfect drainage and perfect water supply, all paid for by you and me. Meanwhile the "new" plan to ostensibly restore the Everglades relies on Everglades Agricultural Area drainage for water supply, and taxpayers for construction and operation of more water quality treatment areas to clean up the dirty drainage.

Apparently, we can break this cycle of abuse only by electing new and responsible leaders.

The Farm Bill, which includes the sugar subsidies, will come up again in the future. We must demand that our congressmen eliminate the wasteful program that not only costs the public billions in extra supermarket prices but causes immense damages to the Everglades and estuaries.

With hopes for a restored estuary,

The Rivers Coalition Defense Fund