



County Administration

P.O. Box 1989
West Palm Beach, FL 33402-1989
(561) 355-2030
FAX: (561) 355-3982
www.pbcgov.com



**Palm Beach County
Board of County
Commissioners**

Dave Kerner, Mayor

Robert S. Weinroth, Vice Mayor

Hal R. Valeche

Gregg K. Weiss

Mary Lou Berger

Melissa McKinlay

Mack Bernard

County Administrator

Verdenia C. Baker

*"An Equal Opportunity
Affirmative Action Employer"*

Official Electronic Letterhead

November 6, 2020

Via Email: lglen@sfwmd.gov

Lawrence Glenn
Division Director, Water Resources
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

Dear Mr. Glenn,

**Subject: Request to Schedule a Public Hearing on the
Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir Water
Reservation Rule**

Palm Beach County (County) supports the proposed Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir project and other state and federal efforts to increase water supply for municipal, environmental and other water needs. The County also supports reserving water for the benefit of fish and wildlife and the environment and has been actively participating in the EAA Reservoir Water Reservation rulemaking process since its inception.

The County, like many South Florida governments, relies on the Central and South Florida (C&SF) Project's regional water management system, including Lake Okeechobee, to protect its citizens from flooding, protect public water supply from depletion, and restore ecosystems. Therefore, clear, consistent and unambiguous operational strategies for existing and future water management infrastructure are critical to ensuring water supplies are protected and ecosystem restoration objectives are achieved. However, there remains uncertainty regarding how Lake Okeechobee will be operated in conjunction with the proposed EAA Reservoir.

For example, the proposed EAA Reservoir Water Reservation Rule (Rule) was developed based on the current Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule of 2008 (LORS2008), which was intended to be temporary until the Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation is complete (expected in 2022). Also, by the time the proposed EAA Reservoir is anticipated to be operational in 2028, both LORS2008, and the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (the new regulation schedule to be in place by 2022), will no longer be valid.



Mr. Lawrence Glenn
November 6, 2020
Page 2 of 2

Given the many operational uncertainties, the County respectfully requests that the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board schedule a public hearing prior to adoption of its EAA Reservoir Water Reservation Rule, pursuant to the requirements in Section 120.54(3)(c)1, Florida Statutes. A public hearing will provide SFWMD staff the opportunity to fully explain the proposed Rule, respond to questions and comments and increase transparency and accountability.

It is the County's understanding that other municipalities, special districts, environmental groups and affected stakeholders have important comments to contribute and these comments should be heard in a public setting. So, it is reasonable, and in fact a normal procedure for a rule of such magnitude and importance, to be fully discussed before the SFWMD Governing Board.

The County looks forward to continuing its partnership and mutually beneficial working relationship with the SFWMD to maintain and enhance our region's water resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McBryan", followed by a horizontal line.

Jeremy McBryan, PE, CFM
County Water Resources Manager

cc: Members, SFWMD Governing Board
Drew Bartlett, SFWMD
Don Medellin, SFWMD
Verdenia Baker, County Administrator, Palm Beach County
Jon Van Arnam, Deputy County Administrator, Palm Beach County
Patrick Rutter, Assistant County Administrator, Palm Beach County
Todd Bonlarron, Assistant County Administrator, Palm Beach County
Members, Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners