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RESOLUTION
NUMBER 2019-063

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ON THE RE-EVALUATION OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE OPERATIONS BY THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PURSUANT TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE LAKE OKEECHOBEE SYSTEM OPERATING MANUAL.

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee is the liquid heart of an integrated regional water management system and is essential and interconnected to communities, businesses, public water supply utilities and ecosystems throughout South Florida; and

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee is an integral component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and is critical to meeting the environmental restoration and water supply needs of South Florida; and

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee is essential to protecting the region's water supply infrastructure from saltwater intrusion by providing a source of freshwater to prevent the migration of saltwater into coastal wellfields and saltwater intrusion into the Caloosahatchee River, which affects lower Charlotte Harbor; and

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee's authorized project purposes include flood control, water supply, recreation, navigation, environmental effects to fish and wildlife, and cultural and recreational resources; and

WHEREAS, Section 1106 of the 2018 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) directs the Secretary of the Army to expedite completion of the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule to coincide with completion of the Herbert Hoover Dike project, and may include all relevant aspects of the CERP; and

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WHEREAS, in January 2019, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) announced that, in accordance with Section 1106 of the 2018 WRDA, the Corps is beginning preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for the Lake Okeechobee System Operations Manual (LOSOM), which is to re-evaluate and define operations for the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule that takes into account nearly complete additional infrastructure which will soon be operational components of the water management system; and

WHEREAS, rehabilitation activities on Lake Okeechobee's Herbert Hoover Dike by the Corps began in 2001 and are expected to be complete by 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule of 2008 (LORS08) was implemented as an interim measure to protect the public from the risk of catastrophic failure of the Herbert Hoover Dike; and

WHEREAS, Charlotte County wishes to support our sister counties in South Florida during the evaluation process of Lake Okeechobee operations and the resultant LOSOM.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that the Board hereby supports the following as it relates to the re-evaluation of Lake Okeechobee operations by the Corps:

1. A science-based evaluation that is transparent and acknowledges and balances all congressionally-authorized purposes of Lake Okeechobee operations; and
2. Performance measures that appropriately and accurately characterize impacts to all communities as it relates to water supply, the environment, and the economy; and

3. The incorporation of data and methods to ensure proposed operations improve lake ecology, protect water supplies and are robust and resilient to expected climatic variability; and

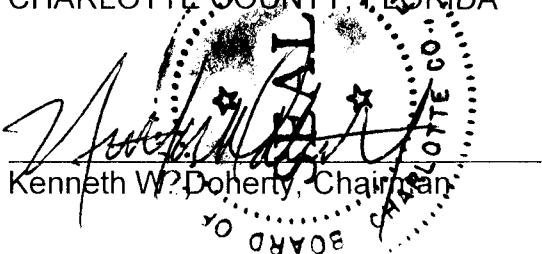
4. The implementation of water storage and water quality treatment projects in Lake Okeechobee tributary basins north of the Lake and storage and treatment in all watersheds; and

5. Lake Okeechobee operations that assist in achieving restoration flows and other key ecosystem goals, including performance measures developed by CERP's Restoration Coordination & Verification (RECOVER) program and updated performance measures should reflect ecosystem needs; and

6. The avoidance and/or minimization of Lake Okeechobee discharges to the Caloosahatchee River.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED this 14th day of May, 2019.


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: 
Kenneth W. Doherty, Chairman

ATTEST:
Roger D. Eaton, Clerk of the Circuit
Court and Ex-officio Clerk of the
Board of County Commissioners

By: 
Michelle DiBenedino
Deputy Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

By: 
Janette S. Knowlton, County Attorney
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