

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 11, 2021

The Honorable Jaime A. Pinkham
Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
Headquarters, US Army Corps of Engineers
441 G. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Pinkham,

On behalf of several stakeholders in Palm Beach, Hendry, and Okeechobee counties, we are providing you with their letter requesting a 90-day extension on the selection of an alternative for the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM).

As you are aware, the Army Corps has been in the process of creating LOSOM over the past two years, with a final product expected in October 2022. Since the water modeling was just released on June 9, 2021, they believe there is not enough time to review the massive amount of data and accurately compare all of the LOSOM alternatives before the Army Corps makes an initial selection on July 16, 2021.

As this decision will greatly affect all water users in South Florida for the next ten years, we encourage you to consider this request and are happy to provide additional information.

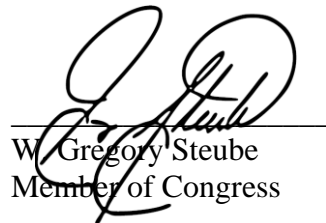
Sincerely,



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Mayor's Office

Keith A. James
Mayor

June 9, 2021

The Honorable Lois Frankel
Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
2500 N. Military Trail, Suite 490
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Re: Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM)

Dear Congresswoman Lois Frankel:

On behalf of the undersigned governmental entities, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the development of the new Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). The Army Corps of Engineers is charged with reevaluating to be implemented after the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation is complete in 2022. We want to thank you for meeting with us on June 3, 2021 in a virtual town hall meeting and listening to our collective concerns.

As you know, the development of LOSOM is vital to supporting our local economies. We represent a broad and diverse group of communities, with one commonality - our communities and residents all depend on Lake Okeechobee. We depend on the Lake for our drinking water, irrigation, navigation, fishing, and cultural and recreational resources. Therefore, it is critically important to us that the new lake schedule meet its water supply allocations for all of the foregoing purposes.

Because the LOSOM effort began in late 2018, it has been a complicated process to follow. While the Army Corps has progressed with various computer models to evaluate scenarios, the Army Corps has yet to provide the public with an analysis or supporting data for the five alternatives announced at the May 7, 2021 LOSOM stakeholder meeting. Consequently, it is impossible to evaluate each alternative and provide meaningful input.

With a Lake schedule that will likely be in place for 10 years, we desperately need additional time to understand the science behind the alternatives and how they will affect our communities. We have all learned a great deal over the years and we want to ensure we are being mindful of the lifeline created by Lake Okeechobee. Therefore, we are requesting your assistance in contacting the Army Corps to request a 90-day extension from the date the Army Corps shares the modeling results with the public, and prior to its selection of a tentatively selected plan. We believe this is a reasonable and proper request which will allow this stakeholder-driven process to be implemented in a fair and transparent manner.

Thank you for considering our request, your leadership, and your engagement in this important matter that will impact millions of South Floridians for years to come.

Yours in service,



Keith James, Mayor
City of West Palm Beach

Undersigned Governmental Entities:

Danielle H. Moore, Mayor
Town of Palm Beach

Bernice Fischer, Mayor
South Palm Beach

Dowling Watford, Jr., Mayor
City of Okeechobee

Keith W. Babb, Mayor
City of Pahokee

Joe Kyles, Mayor
City of South Bay

Steve Wilson, Mayor
City of Belle Glade

Kristine Peterson, Mayor
City of Clewiston

Brett Whiddon, Mayor
City of Moore Haven

Hendry County, FL

Okeechobee County, FL

Glades County, FL

Lake Worth Drainage District