



WEST PALM BEACH

Public Utilities

Toni Edwards
Senior Scientist
Applied Sciences Bureau/Coastal Ecosystems Section
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

Dear Mr. Edwards,

The City of West Palm Beach is providing the following comments in response to the *Technical Document to Support the Central Everglades Planning Project Everglades Agricultural Area A-2 Reservoir Water Reservation (dated May 2020)* and related peer review presentation materials.

The City is the largest municipality in Palm Beach County with more than 110,000 residents. The City also operates a public water supply system that provides clean, safe, and cost-effective potable water to approximately 150,000 residents of the City, the Town of Palm Beach, and the Town of South Palm Beach. The City is dedicated to ensuring that its water supply will be protected from environmental harm. Additionally, the City is committed to protecting environmentally sensitive features including Grassy Waters Preserve and the Loxahatchee River Watershed. The City also utilizes a portion of its permitted water supply to maintain water stages in Grassy Waters Preserve to protect the unique remnant of the Everglades from environmental harm. Grassy Waters Preserve is an ecologically critical wetland habitat for various threatened and endangered species including the endangered Everglades Snail Kite. Additionally, the City is also the principle source of water supply during the dry season to maintain Minimum Flows and Levels (MFL's) to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River, a federally designated Wild and Scenic River.

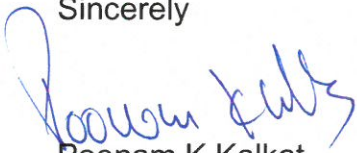
The City of West Palm Beach supports the concept of an Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) A-2 Reservoir project and other state and federal efforts to restore the ecosystems throughout the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) project's water management system. West Palm Beach like many South Florida governments relies on the C&SF system for public water supply, to protect its citizens from flooding, to protect critical ecosystems and to guard against salt-water intrusion.

The City however is unable to meaningfully comment on the *Technical Document to Support the Central Everglades Planning Project Everglades Agricultural Area A-2 Reservoir Water Reservation (dated May 2020)* and related peer review presentation materials. The City's position is that there is insufficient information on the record for the

City to comment at this time. An Operating Plan for the EAA A-2 Reservoir project will first need to be developed in order to demonstrate protection of the City of West Palm Beach existing water rights. It is premature to move forward with a water reservation for the (EAA) A-2 Reservoir project prior to determination of the impact of the reservation on water supply for the City of West Palm Beach and the critical environmental features such as Grassy Waters Preserve and Loxahatchee River.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me by phone (561-822-2284) or email (pkalkat@wpb.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely



Poonam K Kalkat
Director of Public Utilities
401 Clematis Street
West Palm Beach
FL 33401

June 25, 2020