



**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**

Mack Bernard, Mayor

Dave Kerner, Vice Mayor

Hal R. Valeche

Gregg K. Weiss

Robert S. Weinroth

Mary Lou Berger

Melissa McKinlay

**County Administrator**

Verdenia C. Baker

June 5, 2019

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
404 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings  
2353 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Subject: An Invitation to Discuss Lake Okeechobee**

Dear Congressman Diaz-Balart and Congressman Hastings:

The Counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee truly appreciate your active engagement in protecting South Florida's environment and economy as Co-Chairmen of the Congressional Everglades Caucus. Under your collective leadership, the Everglades Caucus has effectively educated Congress about the Everglades, and fostered support for essential projects that are protective of long-term sustainability of the Everglades ecosystem, associated regional water resources, and the communities and economies that depend on them.

On May 7, 2019, a meeting of historic significance was held in Okeechobee, Florida with County Commissioners from Glades, Hendry, Okeechobee, Martin, and Palm Beach Counties. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss areas of agreement on Lake Okeechobee water levels, the need for regional cooperation to improve the water quality of the Lake, the desire for healthy estuaries and a long-term water resources strategy that is protective of all communities and industries. Encouraging aspects of the discussion included the recognition that participants have a responsibility to address local issues and a desire to change the collective narrative from one of "shared adversity" to "mutually beneficial."

The conversation on water issues related to Lake Okeechobee and Everglades Restoration is evolving, and we invite you to engage with us in this discussion. We respectfully invite you and the other Everglades Caucus members to our region to meet with County Commissioners, visit the communities and economies that are affected by Lake Okeechobee operations, and share items of mutual concern.

*"An Equal Opportunity  
Affirmative Action Employer"*



Page Two (Cont'd)  
Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Honorable Alcee L. Hasting  
June 5, 2019

We are hopeful that you will accept our offer to host this meeting for the Everglades Caucus, and capitalize on a multi-county effort to best coordinate and agree on a path forward that will be beneficial to all.

Kindest Regards,

---

Tim Stanley, Chairman  
Glades County

---

Mitchell Wills, Chairperson  
Hendry County

---

Edward V. Ciampi, Chairman  
Martin County

---

Terry W. Burroughs, Chairman  
Okeechobee County

---

Mack Bernard, Mayor  
Palm Beach County

Cc: Verdenia C. Baker, County Administrator, Palm Beach County  
Robbie Chartier, County Administrator, Okeechobee County  
Jennifer Davis, County Administrator, Hendry County  
Taryn Kryzda, County Administrator, Martin County  
Martin Murphy, County Administrator, Glades County  
Lt. Col. Jennifer Reynolds, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Drew Bartlett, South Florida Water Management District