



Florida Oceanographic Society

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Resolution

WHEREAS, for more than 95 years, the public health, economies and environments of the St. Lucie Estuary and the Caloosahatchee Estuary have been damaged by the willful diversion of Lake Okeechobee overflow away from its natural course south to the Everglade; and

WHEREAS, the damage to the public health, economies and environments of the estuarine regions result not only from the diversion of overflow water from Lake Okeechobee that lowers salinity, but also from the massive amounts of toxic algae, nutrient pollution and suspended sediment carried by these regulatory releases; and

WHEREAS, the pollution of Lake Okeechobee has been steadily increasing for the last several years, with historically high phosphorus loads entering the Lake in 2017 of 2.3 million pounds and at more than five (5) times the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) established for the watershed in 2001 under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this historic pollution of the Lake, a massive bloom of toxic blue green algae formed during the summer of 2018 that covered 90 percent of the open water surface of the Lake, and was present in the water that was diverted to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries; and

WHEREAS, over the last decade 2.9 trillion gallons of polluted water from Lake Okeechobee has been diverted to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries, and this water has brought with it toxic algae, 2.9 million pounds of phosphorus, 35 million pounds of nitrogen, and 421 million pounds of suspended sediment. This pollution has endangered public health, resulted in significant economic harm to the regions, destroyed massive amounts of seagrass and oyster beds, and exacerbated red tide events; and

WHEREAS, the estuarine regions contain numerous state and federal environmentally sensitive waterbodies, as well as dozens of threatened and endangered species; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida is responsible for establishing and enforcing water quality regulations designed to protect public health and environmentally sensitive waterbodies; and

WHEREAS, the process established by the State of Florida for controlling pollution in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed, known as the Basin Management Action Plan, has been demonstrated to be ineffective;

WHEREAS, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has oversight of the Clean Water Act programs;

To inspire environmental stewardship of Florida's coastal ecosystems through education, research and advocacy.



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Florida Oceanographic Society supports state and federal measures that reduce pollution sufficiently to achieve TMDLs within the watersheds of Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries. These measures include;

- 1 -strengthening water quality regulations, including establishing discharge limits for parcels that discharge into state waters (including "Works of the District"), appropriate monitoring, requirements for landowner collaboration, and when necessary, enforcement;
- 2 - strengthening the Basin Management Action Plans, including accelerating timeframes to achieve the TMDLs; establishing subwatershed-specific load allocations; annual assessments based on measured nutrient loads (or concentrations for tidal basins); increasing staffing to verify and monitor the implementation of Best Management Practices; and incorporating estimates of pollution loading from the application of Class AA and Class B biosolids.
- 3 - strengthening reporting requirements, monitoring and overall regulation of the application of Class AA and Class B biosolids.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the Board Chair of Florida Oceanographic Society authorizes and forwards this Resolution on behalf of Florida Oceanographic Society by signature below:

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED THE 19TH DAY OF December, 2018.



Allen Herskowitz, Chair, Board of Directors
Florida Oceanographic Society



Mark Perry, Executive Director
Florida Oceanographic Society