

# Talking Points in support of Senate Bill (SB) 10

## **Background:**

Water storage south of Lake Okeechobee in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) is essential. Essential to reducing discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers which threaten public health and the local economy, restoring clean water flow to the Everglades and the Florida Keys, all while protecting the drinking water for 8 million Floridians and many more tourists.

- The problem before us is two-fold – too much water wasted east and west and not enough water going south.
- A prudent solution must address both.
- Water storage, treatment and conveyance in the EAA is the best option to reduce the damaging releases to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries and to improve the water flow south.
- This project has been part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan since 2000 and enjoys a 50/50 cost share.
- The Legacy Florida Act passed and signed into law by Governor Scott in 2016 provides funding from Amendment 1, supported by 75% of voters, for purchasing land in the EAA and for Everglades restoration projects.
- State law requires the South Florida Water Management District to prioritize projects that reduce discharges to St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries.
- A southern reservoir can reduce discharges by almost 50% and send water to the Everglades, Florida Bay and the Florida Keys when it is needed, but a northern reservoir will only reduce discharges by 6%.
- We can't keep kicking the can down the road. The costs and risks of further delay are staggering.
- EAA reservoir requires less than 15 percent of the EAA, neither eliminating farming nor harming communities that call the Everglades home.
- SB10 acknowledges Florida's water crisis and expedites the solution that respects private property rights and agriculture.
- There has been scientific consensus and recognition by state leaders since 2000 that additional water storage south of Lake Okeechobee is necessary to stop this ongoing problem.