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Date: July 30, 2013  
To: Senator Joe Negron  
From: Nathaniel Reed

My dear friend,

I have a long standing commitment to join my son on an adventure in Quebec at the time of your hearing in Stuart.

I am sickened by the massive releases of polluted water to both the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries.

I wrote an Op-Ed piece (enclosed) for the Stuart News that is 'the truth and nothing but the truth'.

There are no 'silver bullets' to speed up the restoration effort.

There are fundamental scientifically, unassailable facts that cannot be avoided.

Before water destined to flow south to Florida Bay can be accomplished, the bridges over Tamiami Trail must be completed or the Okeechobee's excess water will damage the dikes surrounding the Water Conservation Areas.

The Central Everglades Plan must be 'jump started'. It is the only hope of moving water south from the lake and the EAA's polluted drainage, cleansing it and allowing it to flow into the water conservation areas and then under the Tamiami Trail bridges into the park.

Upstream, every effort should be made to hold more water so that the lake doesn't rise as quickly as it does now. The rainfall and the drainage will flow into the lake eventually, but must not be allowed to threaten the Hoover Dike. We need to slow down the massive drainage from the Okeechobee watershed by using the higher water stages in the upstream Kissimmee Lakes and flooding the Kissimmee watershed. These two actions will slow the downstream flows and give additional time for water managers to release water in far greater amounts to the estuaries until a third out let is constructed

The state of Florida has made only marginal progress on meeting pollution loading targets spelled out in the Lake Okeechobee Recovery Act, passed by the Legislature in 2000. The deadline to meet the targets is 2015, yet pollution levels are more than 4 times the limits. The 'Best Management Practices' and 'Stormwater Treatment Areas' have proved inadequate. The South Florida Water Management District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection develop plan after plan, but they neither ask for funding from the Legislature nor implement the plans on their own. We must make progress here.

I doubt that you or your committee wants to explore the deplorable financial bailout that the EAA lobbyists achieved in guaranteeing that they pay the minimum of the costs of cleansing their polluted drainage.

Senator, this is not 'rocket science'!

What is needed is for the SFWMD Board to accept the responsibility to become the local sponsor of the Central Everglades Restoration Plan, use BP fine funds to build the needed bridges over Tamiami Trail, fund with or without federal appropriations specific goals that can be accomplished quite quickly that will lead to a southern exit from the lake allowing water to be stored and cleaned before being released to the existing water conservation areas.

The state could take control of its own destiny if it was willing to bond a set of measures and complete a variety of the primary objectives up and downstream of the lake. The citizens of Florida all bear a responsibility to restore the everglades system and should be willing to accept a tax that would allow the state to take charge of its own destiny.

We have all failed as 'stewards' of our beloved Florida. The state's water pollution levels have risen to dramatic highs. Water management has failed to fully grasp the importance of making tough decisions to move Okeechobee south, clean it, hold some of it in 'reservoirs', and release it into the system that allows the now cleansed water to flow under Tamiami Trail into the Everglades National Park.

I understand Dr. Tom Van Lent will be briefing your committee on August 22nd. He is not only an expert on the subject, he is quietly fearless in telling the 'truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth'.

Thank you for organizing the hearing. The villains are not only the water managers, but all of the governmental agencies which have failed in their duties, the legislature that has ignored the facts, the awesome power of the Sugar Industry to block any progress and the people of Florida, lacking dynamic leadership, that have let the current situation exist without facing the 'truth' of our calamity.

Thank you for having the courage to hold public meetings so the outraged citizens who are watching their beloved estuaries fouled by contaminants understand what must happen before clean water will become a reality.

Our most important resources are being destroyed by years of inaction and failure to be understand the truth and nothing but the truth!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Negron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.