



April 15, 2004

Representative Mike Davis
1101 Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Davis,

The Southwest Florida Watershed Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that the interests and concerns of all stakeholders within the Caloosahatchee and Big Cypress Watersheds are addressed, and to ensure that long term management strategies balance the needs of this region's growth and the natural systems upon which our economy and quality of life depend. We last wrote to you on March 5th of this year, asking for your support of the following initiatives during this legislative session:

- ◆ the Estero Bay Nutrient Management Partnership program — a voluntary partnership amongst public and private interests to improve water quality and help insure the long term health of Estero Bay;
- ◆ the application for water resource project funding recently submitted to the State by the Lower West Coast Service Center of the South Florida Water Management District; and
- ◆ the establishment of a statutory water reservation for the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary

It is our understanding that there is new legislation afoot that deals with water reservations. Not all members of our Council have studied the latest version of the proposed language, as it just became available to us yesterday, so we are not taking a position for or against the language at this point. Nonetheless, **we strongly urge you to support to preserve the ability of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Water Management Districts to reserve water for the protection of fish and wildlife or the public health and safety.** Our Council has formally asked both the South Florida Water Management District (in 2002) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (in 2003) to initiate rulemaking for the establishment of a statutory water reservation for the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary. Although neither entity has initiated such work, we continue to pursue this cause. It is critical that we have your support – it is not just the natural systems of Southwest Florida that are at stake, our economy and quality of life are directly tied to the health of the river and estuary! Please help us to ensure that the important, but heretofore little used, resource management tool known as a reservation of water remains available to protect natural systems and the citizens of Florida.

We appreciate your efforts on behalf of the citizens of Southwest Florida and the Southwest Florida Watershed Council.

Sincerely,

Susan Brookman
Chairman

The mission of the Southwest Florida Watershed Council is to protect, conserve, manage and/or restore the land and water resources of the Caloosahatchee and Big Cypress Watersheds. Through increased awareness, participation and cooperation among all stakeholders in consensus building, planning and decision making, we are working to meet the economic, natural and cultural needs for this and succeeding generations.