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Contact:

Michael Williams

(850) 717-4940, Michael.Williams@MyFloridaHouse.gov

Kristen McDonald

(850) 717-5129, Kristen.McDonald@MyFloridaHouse.gov

The Florida House of Representatives Passes “Legacy Florida”

*Legislation establishing an annual dedicated
funding source to restore the Florida Everglades*

Tallahassee, FL – The Florida House of Representatives today passed, with strong bipartisan support, HB 989, which creates the “Legacy Florida” program. Sponsored by Rep. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) and Rep. Matt Caldwell (R- North Fort Myers), the bill will establish a dedicated funding source to restore the Florida Everglades.

The bill will direct funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) for Everglades projects that implement the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, the Long-Term Plan, the final Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan adopted by the Department of Environmental Protection in December 2014, and the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program. The bill is supported by stakeholders including The Everglades Foundation, Audubon Florida, The Florida Land Council, Associated Industries of Florida, and The Nature Conservancy.

“As a seventh-generation Floridian, I want to ensure that my children and their children have the opportunity to enjoy the pristine beauty of the Florida I’ve known,” said Florida House Speaker Steve Crisafulli (R-Merritt Island). “The creation of the Legacy Florida program will allow us provide clean water to Florida’s growing population and will aide us in completing the decades-long restoration of the River of Grass.”

“By passing this legislation to establish the Legacy Florida initiative, the House is ensuring we have a dedicated and reliable funding source to restore the Florida Everglades and preserve its beauty for future generations,” said Rep. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart).

“The restoration of Lake Okeechobee, the Indian River Lagoon, and the Everglades is a major concern for all of Southwest Florida,” said Representative Matt Caldwell (R-North Fort Myers). “With the passage of Legacy Florida, we are taking steps to solve those concerns by creating a dedicated funding stream with the sole purpose of protecting the health of the Everglades.”

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“Legacy Florida” has received the support of major stakeholders across Florida.

Eric Eikenberg, CEO, The Everglades Foundation

"The Everglades Foundation appreciates the Speaker's support of legislation that will dedicate funding to Everglades restoration, and especially the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, to help move projects to completion. The Everglades is an economic engine for this state and a sound investment. Restoration projects create jobs and protect the water supply for one in three Floridians. We look forward to working with the Florida Legislature and the Governor's Office to ensure a dedicated revenue source for a restored Everglades becomes a reality."

Eric Draper, Executive Director, Audubon Florida

“Dedicated funding will ensure steady progress on the projects needed to provide clean water to the Everglades and estuaries. We applaud this legislation and its commitment of state funds to ecosystem restoration. Floridians should welcome this as a major step forward toward implementing plans to meet water quality goals and deliver freshwater flows.”

Robert Thomas, Chairman, Florida Land Council

"The Florida Land Council applauds the establishment of a dedicated funding source for Everglades restoration. Long term funding for the implementation of the Everglades water quality plan, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, and the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program is needed to ensure that there is ample clean water available for a healthy ecosystem while meeting the other water related needs of the region.”

Temperince Morgan, Executive Director, The Nature Conservancy

“The Nature Conservancy applauds the Legislature for creating a steady and predictable funding stream for projects that will improve water quality and quantity for the Everglades and the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries. We believe this significant commitment of Amendment 1 funds assures completion of projects that help to restore essential habitats for Florida’s imperiled species.”

Tom Feeney, President and CEO, Associated Industries of Florida

"Associated Industries of Florida and the Florida H2O Coalition applaud Speaker Steve Crisafulli for supporting dedicated funding for the Everglades, which will help tackle Florida's major water problems in a comprehensive way. By supporting legislation, which would appropriate a portion of Amendment 1 funds annually for Everglades projects, we will be able to see positive impacts through the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan, and the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program. We look forward to working with Florida lawmakers and the Governor to see this funding plan come to fruition during the 2016 Legislative Session."

For more information, please visit the [Florida House of Representatives Website](#).

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