

**DRAFT DOCUMENT ONLY**

**A resolution of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council urging the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners to protect regional environmental and water resources, including Everglades National Park, Florida Bay, and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and uphold the recommendations of Miami-Dade County planning staff to deny CDMP amendment application CDMP20210003.**

**WHEREAS**, the Florida Keys are part of a complex hydrological system that is influenced by waters from the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, as well as the Greater Everglades ecosystem, including Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, and mainland South Florida including Miami-Dade County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) helps protect the unique marine waters and wildlife of the Florida Keys that are a national treasure and of international significance; and

**WHEREAS**, the FKNMS has the authority to coordinate the conservation and management of these marine areas and activities affecting them and to ensure cooperation between Sanctuary managers and other Federal, State, and local authorities with jurisdiction within or adjacent to the Sanctuary; and

**WHEREAS**, chronic lack of freshwater flow that has resulted from decades of development in Florida, coupled with increasingly high temperatures and salinity in Florida Bay, has contributed to mass seagrass die-offs, algal blooms, sponge die-offs, and degraded fishery species habitat in the FKNMS; and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP) was passed by Congress in 2000 as a roadmap to protect, preserve, and restore the Greater Everglades ecosystem, and the State of Florida and Federal Government have since invested billions of taxpayer dollars to restore freshwater flow south to Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District are the federal and local sponsors, respectively, for the implementation of CERP and are actively advancing planning of the Biscayne Bay and Southeastern Everglades Ecosystem Restoration (BBSEER) Project, an integral component of CERP with the goal of restoring freshwater flow to Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, Card Sound, Barnes Sound, and Manatee Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, protection and restoration of lands throughout the Greater Everglades ecosystem, and especially in Miami-Dade County in proximity to Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park, is essential to the long-term success of our shared investment in Everglades restoration; and

**WHEREAS**, the Miami-Dade County Commission is currently considering an amendment application to its Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) which would expand the Miami-Dade County Urban Development Boundary (UDB) to include 793-acres of farmland adjacent to the Homestead Air Reserve Base, and redesignate this parcel from agriculture to 'special district' on the Future Land Use Map; and

**WHEREAS**, the parcel under consideration is within the project scope of BBSEER and currently under evaluation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District for consideration of project features that will deliver more freshwater to Florida Bay and Biscayne Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, Miami-Dade County staff noted major inconsistencies between this proposed project and the County's goals and the requirements outlined in the CDMP, and have recommended that the County deny the application, noting several detrimental environmental and resource impacts including to downstream water resources; and

**WHEREAS**, development of this area could foreclose future opportunities for wetland rehydration or ecosystem restoration projects under BBSEER, reducing project viability and impeding water flow south into Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, and FKNMS.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council:

**1. Urges Miami-Dade County to uphold the determination of county planning staff and deny application CDMP20210003 based on expected detrimental impacts to regional environmental resources and water supply, and interference with CERP implementation.**

**2. Requests the Sanctuary Superintendent transmit copies of this resolution to the Miami-Dade Mayor Danielle Levine-Cava and the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners.**

*Disclaimer: The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council is an interactive liaison between the residents and visitors of the Florida Keys and the staff and management of the FKNMS. The opinions and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission*