

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWN OF DEWEY BEACH, DELAWARE IN OPPOSITION TO HIGH FLOW RELEASE OF WATER FROM LAKE OKEECHOBEE INTO THE CALOOSAHATCHEE WATERSHED AND ST. LUCIE ESTUARY THAT LEAD IN TO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND THE GULF OF MEXICO.**

**WHEREAS**, the US Army Corps of Engineers is currently in the process of releasing water from Lake Okeechobee toward the Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie Estuary in an effort to lower the lake level from the recent rain fall; and

**WHEREAS**, the release contains toxic algae and is entering into the Gulf of Mexico from the Caloosahatchee River and into the Atlantic Ocean from the St. Lucie Estuary; and

**WHEREAS**, the murky, turbid Lake Okeechobee discharge water also kills seagrass, oysters and other life on the sea floor. It blocks light from reaching the seagrass and prohibits photosynthesis. Prolonged exposure to low salinity also kills grass, oysters, and other marine life. Seagrass beds and oysters are the foundation of estuarial marine life and an incredible natural filter. Without them, our estuary ecosystems face an uncertain future; and

**WHEREAS**, the release is killing marine life such as many species of fish, sea turtles, oyster beds, manatee, and is severely damaging the ecosystem that may result in lasting impacts if not stopped; and

**WHEREAS**, the South Florida Water Management District is the State agency charged with managing and protecting the water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply; and

**WHEREAS**, the economies of the Town of Dewey Beach and towns along the Coast of the United States depend heavily on tourism, recreational fishing and the industries that support it; and

**WHEREAS**, release of water from Lake Okeechobee is potentially devastating to our coastal area's fish and marine life due to the contaminated water and resulting algae bloom suffocating and poisoning the marine life that migrate along the coast; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Florida needs land in the Everglades Agricultural Area necessary to clean the Lake Okeechobee discharge water in an attempt to restore natural sheet flow to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. This will take large tracts of contiguous land for the construction of storm water treatment areas that will substantially reduce phosphorous and nitrogen levels in the water; and

**WHEREAS**, land must be acquired in the Everglades Agricultural Area to treat and convey Lake Okeechobee water south to restore the natural flow of lake waters. Amendment 1 (2014),

which passed with a 75% majority and is now a part of the Florida Constitution, specifically provides funding for these land purchases. Approximately 1.5 billion dollars in Amendment 1 funds have been spent by the Florida legislature in 2015 and 2016 without any significant land acquisitions – or even specific land acquisition plans – south of Lake Okeechobee.

**WHEREAS**, after receiving legislative approval spring 2017, a massive reservoir intended to help shift water south from Lake Okeechobee remains years away from being complete. A big factor in the timeline for design and construction of the reservoir is waiting for federal-government approval of its half of the roughly \$1.6 billion project.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved by a majority vote of the Commissioners of the Town of Dewey Beach, Delaware that:

The Town of Dewey Beach opposes the high flow release of Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee River that leads to the Gulf of Mexico and into the St. Lucie Estuary that leads to the Atlantic Ocean, and encourages expediting the acquisition of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area and the building of a water reservoir with expedited financial support from the federal government.

**SO RESOLVED**, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2018.

---

TJ Redefers, Mayor

---

Scott Koenig, Town Manager