

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



# PROCLAMATION

of the

## GOVERNING BOARD

of August 13, 2015

Celebrating 20 years of success of Everglades Agricultural Area farmers working to reduce unprecedented amounts of nutrients in water entering the Everglades

*WHEREAS*, the South Florida Water Management District mission is to manage and protect water resources by balancing and improving water quality in our region;

*WHEREAS*, source controls are one of the first steps in improving water quality targeting pollutants – specifically, nutrients such as phosphorus – at their source to minimize the amount generated and prevent them from entering our waterways;

*WHEREAS*, phosphorus, although a vital nutrient in all natural systems, it is also a fertilizer component that flows across the landscape in stormwater runoff, harming natural areas by promoting algae growth and an overgrowth of non-native plants, crowding out natural vegetation and disrupting food sources and habitats used by native wildlife;

*WHEREAS*, the Everglades is naturally a low-nutrient system where even small amounts of additional nutrients can upset the ecological balance needed by the native plants and animals in the Everglades;

*WHEREAS*, the Florida Legislature directed the South Florida Water Management District to implement a Source Control Permitting Program with nutrient-reducing requirements for the Everglades through the Everglades Forever Act;

*WHEREAS*, today we celebrate the program's 20th year of success: Water flowing from farmlands in the Everglades Agricultural Area achieved phosphorus reductions that consistently exceed those required by law;

*WHEREAS*, over the program's 20-year compliance history, implementation of improved farming techniques, known as Best Management Practices resulted in the overall average annual phosphorus reduction of 56 percent, more than twice the amount required by law;

*WHEREAS*, this year, Everglades Agricultural Area farmers produced a 79-percent phosphorus reduction compared to before the South Florida Water Management District program was initiated in the region south of Lake Okeechobee – more than triple the reduction requirement;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED** by the South Florida Water Management District on this 13th day of August, 2015, congratulations, special recognition and appreciation upon the Everglades Agricultural Area farmers on the milestone occasion of the Source Control Permitting Program's 20 years of compliance. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to improve Everglades water quality.

Daniel O'Keefe  
South Florida Water Management District  
Governing Board Chair