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May 2, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting \$3 million for Brevard County, Florida, to remove accumulations of decaying, organic, mucky sediments from Sykes Creek, a major tributary to the Banana River Lagoon adjacent to the Ulumay Wildlife Sanctuary, thereby reducing annual nitrogen flux, algae blooms, toxic hydrogen sulfide, and fish kills, while also increasing oxygen and helping to preserve healthy, sediments that promote habitat for marine life. The project will also prevent nutrient pollution impacts in the Indian River Lagoon.

The entity to receive funding for this project is Brevard County, Natural Resources Management Department, located at 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building A – Suite 219, Viera, Florida 32940.

The Indian River Lagoon has been designated as a National Estuary and the Banana River Lagoon is federally listed as impaired for excess nutrients. Muck deposits are currently smothering approximately 10% of the lagoon bottom. Excess nutrients are released as muck decays, feeding harmful algal blooms. These blooms manufacture toxins and block light needed by seagrass to survive. Extensive loss of seagrass is responsible for the starvation of hundreds of manatees, an iconic and listed species.

Without dredging, muck will continue for centuries to smother marine life and pollute the water column above as it slowly decays. Muck has been mapped and characterized throughout Brevard. The most harmful areas have been prioritized for environmental dredging, including 560,000 cubic yards in Sykes Creek.

Storms cause muck to resuspend and smother larger areas than the deep pockets where it gradually accumulates. Environmental dredging will make the lagoon more resilient to increasing storminess associated with climate change. Clean water and healthy seagrass beds are critical to subsistence, fishermen, and the local economy.

This project is an appropriate use of Federal funds because it will improve livelihoods, prevent harmful algal blooms that damage the environment, and make the community more resilient.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for the purposes authorized by the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1381 et seq. and funding from the state clean water revolving fund.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Posey", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Posey

Member of Congress