

November 8, 2018



The Honorable Rick Scott
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

On behalf of The Everglades Foundation, I am writing to strongly protest the illegal, shameful and undemocratic action this morning by your appointees at the South Florida Water Management District to extend leases now scheduled to expire for acreage owned by the State of Florida that has been designated for construction of the Everglades reservoir.

In a breathtaking effort to thwart the public will, less than 48 hours after a statewide election during which you repeatedly and personally assured the people of Florida of your commitment to protecting Florida's environment, it appears that your appointees at SFWMD have been engaged in secret negotiations with Florida Crystals to extend these leases for the growing of sugar cane through the year 2027, a fact we just learned yesterday through a public records request.

Under the cover of night, SFWMD amended its agenda to change the item from a general discussion to call for a vote on a lease that was not published until after 9:00 p.m. last night. The deception and lack of transparency by a government agency is alarming. As a businessman, you should be embarrassed by the terms accepted by your appointees, allowing Florida Crystals to terminate the lease for convenience with one year's notice but not affording SFWMD the same right, and not allowing the site to be used for temporary storage in the interim before full-scale implementation of the reservoir project.

Your appointees ignored the urgent request of Governor-elect Ron DeSantis and U.S. Representative Brian Mast (R-Stuart) to delay any action until the Governor-elect could be briefed on the matter. Your office was aware of our concerns about this matter but did nothing to intervene. Considering this, I must conclude that your administration is complicit in this illegal maneuver that benefits a single sugar company over the interests of the people of Florida, who own the land in question.

If the administration is not, I ask that you publicly denounce the action taken today by SFWMD's Governing Board and demand the resignations of the entire Governing Board and Executive Director Ernie Marks.

Sincerely,



Eric Eikenberg
Chief Executive Officer