BRIAN J. MAST
18TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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November 20, 2020

Colonel Andrew Kelly
Jacksonville District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32207

To Colonel Andrew Kelly:

On November 19th, you stated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was planning to continue the heavy-volume discharges from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie that have been ongoing since October 14th. I am writing to urge you to stop these discharges.

Over the past month, 35 billion gallons of water have been discharged into the St. Lucie by the Army Corps. As you are aware, these sustained, high-volume discharges are damaging our ecosystem.

When you began discharges you stated that you would stop discharging when you successfully slowed the rate of rise on Lake Okeechobee. The Lake is substantially lower today than it was a week ago. Furthermore, according to Kevin Rodriguez, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Melbourne, "for all intents and purposes the rainy season is over and the dry season is here." He also stated that the relevant area of Florida isn't forecast to have "any significant rainfall in the foreseeable future."

Your decision to continue discharges despite these facts is akin to Lucy pulling the football out from underneath Charlie Brown. To be clear, our Treasure Coast community has been Charlie Brown for too long. We will not continue to tolerate the abuse.

In conclusion, with the lake level stabilized and the wet season over, it is time to stop discharges before the Army Corps causes even more long-term, irreversible damage to our estuary. I appreciate your immediate attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,

Brian Mast
Member of Congress