



City of Cape Coral

Office of the Mayor

June 2, 2021

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

Dear Colonel Kelly:

The City of Cape Coral would like to thank you for your leadership to allow flexible operations of Lake Okeechobee since 2019 and for the opportunity to submit input regarding the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM).

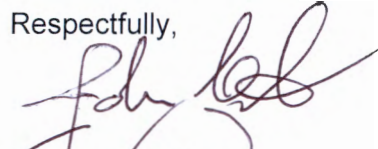
The City shares the same concerns recently brought to your attention by Lee County, the City of Sanibel, and the City of Bonita Springs. We are very concerned that the improvements in frequency of harmful flows that our technical team supported throughout the LOSOM process will not be maintained in the upcoming Preferred Alternatives.

LOSOM, should seek to create better balance than the current Lake regulation schedule; and, most certainly, LOSOM should not increase the current imbalance that exists. The upcoming LOSOM Preferred Alternatives that the USACE is preparing will be based on 5 chosen Balanced Alternatives that were presented in May 2021. The City of Cape Coral would like to emphasize that out of the 5 Balanced Alternatives (AA, BB, CC, DD and EE) chosen by the USACE, none were to the benefit of the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary, which starkly contrasted with other areas of the system and water supply.

Lee County suffered like no other in the summer of 2018, besieged not only by Blue Green Algae from Lake Okeechobee, but also from Red Tide likely fueled and exacerbated by the nutrient laden water from the Lake. By design, the Caloosahatchee outlet has never benefited from the Central and Southern Flood Control and residents of Lee County have long shouldered the burden of flood control of other residents and interests of Florida.

The economy and businesses of Lee County, largely based on our sustainable coastal waterway ecosystems, should no longer be asked by Congress, the US Army Corps of Engineers, other local governments agencies or private interest to be further devastated for the benefit of others. This is not balanced by any definition and untenable for the City of Cape Coral and its residents.

Respectfully,



Mayor John Gunter
City of Cape Coral

c: Representative Byron Donalds, District 19
Representative Greg Stube, District 17
Governor Ron DeSantis
Chairman Chauncey Goss, South Florida Water Management District
Executive Director Drew Bartlett, South Florida Water Management District
Chairman Kevin Ruane, Lee County Board of County Commissioners
Mayor Holly D. Smith, City of Sanibel
Mayor Rick Steinmeyer, City of Bonita Springs
City of Cape Coral City Council
City Manager Rob Hernandez, City of Cape Coral