

*1. Administrative Details*

**Proposal Name: Lake Okeechobee - Everglades Ecosystem Protection**

**by Agency: Okeechobee Utility Authority**

**Locations: FL**

**POC Name:**

**POC Phone:**

**POC Email:**

**Date Submitted: 09/23/2015**

**Confirmation Number: d3f5568a-c613-492b-929a-9399587d0605**

*Supporting Documents*

<b>File Name</b>	<b>Date Uploaded</b>
USACOE Request Cover Letter dtd 092315.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment A.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment C.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment F.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment G.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment B.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment D.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment H.pdf	09/23/2015
USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment H.pdf	09/23/2015
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USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment E.pdf	09/23/2015

*2. Provide the name of the primary sponsor and all non-Federal interests that have contributed or are expected to contribute toward the non-Federal share of the proposed feasibility study or modification.*

Sponsor	Letter of Support
Okeechobee Utility Authority (Primary)	To collect and treat wastewater which will prevent nutrients from septic tanks systems to enter waters of the State of Florida (Taylor Creek) and Lake Okeechobee (headwaters to the Everglades).

*3. State if this proposal is for a feasibility study, a modification to an authorized USACE feasibility study or a modification to an authorized USACE project. If it is a proposal for a modification, provide the authorized water resources development feasibility study or project name.*

Feasibility Study

***4. Clearly articulate the specific project purpose(s) of the proposed study or modification. Demonstrate that the proposal is related to USACE mission and authorities and specifically address why additional or new authorization is needed.***

This project removes a potential environmental health hazard (non-functioning or leaking septic tanks) to the residents and users of the waterways. The project will remove nutrient sources which advances vegetative growth in the waterways which in turn hinders waterway transportation. These excessive nutrients will have an adverse effect on water quality (environmental harm).

5. To the extent practicable, provide an estimate of the total cost, and the Federal and non-Federal share of those costs, of the proposed study and, separately, an estimate of the cost of construction or modification.

	<b>Federal</b>	<b>Non-Federal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Study</b>	\$275,000	\$175,000	\$450,000
<b>Construction</b>	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$20,000,000

Explanation (if necessary)

***6. To the extent practicable, describe the anticipated monetary and nonmonetary benefits of the proposal including benefits to the protection of human life and property; improvement to transportation; the national economy; the environment; or the national security interests of the United States.***

effluent from a failing septic tank system? Currently, the South Florida Water Management District and the USACE expend monies on aquatic vegetation management in this area. Additionally, the SFWMD spends money on offline treatment of surface waters to improve water quality. If the septic tanks were removed from service, the causes due to poor water quality and unsafe water quality from these facilities would be removed from consideration.

**7. Does local support exist? If 'Yes', describe the local support for the proposal.**

Yes

### **Local Support Description**

Letters of support from the business community, Okeechobee County Commission, State Representative, State Senator, Water Management District and U.S. Senate are attached for review and consideration.

**8. Does the primary sponsor named in (2.) above have the financial ability to provide for the required cost share?**

Yes

# Additional Proposal Information

(This is as uploaded, a blank page will show if nothing was submitted)

**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment H.pdf**



**Cary Pigman**  
Florida House of Representatives  
District 55

cary.pigman@myfloridahouse.gov

**Sebring Office**  
205 South Commerce Ave., Suite B  
Sebring, Florida 33870-3626  
(863) 386-6000  
(863) 386-6002 fax

**Okeechobee Office**  
55 South Parrott Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida 34974-2968  
(863) 462-5019  
(863) 462-5023 fax

**Tallahassee Office**  
214 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300  
(850) 717-5055

December 28, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, FL 34974

**Re: Support for Federal WRRDA Grant Funding**

Dear Chairman Clay,

I appreciate the efforts of your Authority to prevent nutrients and polluted septic effluent from entering the Treasure Island waterways that lead into the waters of Lake Okeechobee, the Indian Riven Lagoon, and the Everglades.

I understand that your application to be included in the WRRDA 2014 will provide for removal of many private septic systems and the East Side Force Main Project. As you know I have been working to provide assistance to OUA in your wastewater projects, however, state funding being limited your Federal Funding Grant search is commendable.

Because the Treasure Island project is located in the Nubbin Slough Sub-watershed and drains into Lake Okeechobee I offer this letter in support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cary Pigman".

Cary Pigman  
Representative, District 55

Health Quality Subcommittee, Chair;  
Civil Justice Subcommittee; Health & Human Services Committee;  
Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee; Local Government Affairs Subcommittee

**Attachment H** – the Honorable FL Representative Cary Pigman

# Primary Sponsor Letter of Support

(As uploaded)

**USACOE Request Cover Letter dtd 092315.pdf**



## OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY

100 SW 5th Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida 34974-4221

(863) 763-9460  
FAX: (863) 467-4335

September 23, 2015

Ms. Lisa Kiefel, Planning Community of Practice  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street NW.  
Attn: CECW-CE  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Re: Section 7001 Water Resources Reform and Development Act 2014

Dear Ms. Kiefel:

I am writing in response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers request for proposals, published in the May 26, 2015 Federal Register, in accordance with Section 7001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014). On behalf of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, Florida, I am submitting a project for consideration.

I respectfully request the Army Corps to conduct a feasibility study, which we believe would support a viable public utility infrastructure project that will protect the Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystems and provide for the health and safety of residents and visitors in the Lake Okeechobee Region. The Okeechobee Utility Authority would act as the non-Federal sponsor for this project.

This project will directly support the Everglades/Lake Okeechobee Protection Acts, and is consistent with existing Corps of Engineers authority to carry out Environmental Infrastructure projects, which have been authorized in previous Water Resources Development Acts and funded in annual Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation.

The proposed Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project would provide for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. The flow from these facilities either directly or indirectly flow into tributaries to Taylor Creek, near where Taylor Creek flows into Lake Okeechobee. As you are aware, Lake Okeechobee is the headwaters for the Everglades. Additionally, flows from the lake are periodically diverted towards marine estuaries located on both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal regions.

Since the project is designed to remove nutrients and bacteria, water quality impacts from the septic tank/package treatment plant discharges will be removed. These nutrient rich discharges lead to excessive growth of emergent and submerged plants such as cattails and noxious blue-green algae, to name a few. With the removal of these excessively elevated nutrients to the aquatic ecosystem, overall water quality will improve in the receiving body. Water clarity will improve which in turn will allow for native submerged plants (i.e., southern naiad, muskgrass, peppergrass and tapegrass) to thrive, thereby providing cover for marine species and a dependable food source for others.

In addition, this project will support the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, and Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Ecosystem system a priority.

This project has the direct support of Okeechobee County and the City of Okeechobee, Florida Department of Environmental Protection as well as the South Florida Water Management District are all aware of the project.

The total cost for this project is approximately \$20,000,000. The Okeechobee Utility Authority has the financial ability to provide up to 50% for this project.

Please find several letters attached providing support for the conceptual idea of the Treasure Island project.

- **Attachment A** – Treasure Island Service Area
- **Attachment B** – Okeechobee County Average Taxable Property Values
- **Attachment C** – Treasure Island Conceptual Sewer Alignment
- **Attachment D** – South Florida Water Management District
- **Attachment E** – the Honorable U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, Florida
- **Attachment F** – the Economic Council of Okeechobee
- **Attachment G** – the Honorable FL Senator Denise Grimsley
- **Attachment H** – the Honorable FL Representative Cary Pigman
- **Attachment I** – the Board of Okeechobee County Commissioners

Thank you for your consideration of this project. We look forward to discussing it with you further. If you have any questions for us, please contact our Washington consultant, Jim Davenport at 703-841-0626, or the Okeechobee Utility Authority Executive Director, John Hayford at 863-763-9460.

Sincerely,



John F. Hayford, P.E.  
Executive Director  
Okeechobee Utility Authority

# Additional Proposal Information

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**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment A.pdf**



Attachment A – Treasure Island Service Area

# Additional Proposal Information

(This is as uploaded, a blank page will show if nothing was submitted)

**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment B.pdf**



Executive  
Director  
Marshal Stranburg

5/20/2015

To: John Hayford  
From: Property Tax Oversight, Research and Analysis  
Subject: Okeechobee County

Below is the requested information related to per capita taxable value and percentage of assessed property that is exempt from ad valorem taxation.

**Statewide**

Total Just Value	\$2,054,586,265,161
Total Assessed Value	\$1,821,608,093,764
Taxable Value	\$1,391,611,734,036
Exempt Amount	\$429,996,359,728
Population	19,382,716
Per Capita Taxable Value Average	\$71,797
Percentage of Assessed Value Exempt from Taxation	23.61%

**Okeechobee County**

Total Just Value	\$2,616,463,091
Total Assessed Value	\$2,102,339,756
Taxable Value	\$1,522,142,854
Exempt Amount	\$580,196,902
Population	37,816
Per Capita Taxable Value Average	\$40,251
Percentage of Assessed Value Exempt from Taxation	27.60%
Millage	8.5470

Source: "Ad Valorem Data Book 2014" (FL DOR) and "Florida Estimates of Populations 2014" (BEBR).

Child Support Enforcement – Ann Coffin, Director · General Tax Administration – Maria Johnson, Director  
Property Tax Oversight – Sue Harlan, Interim Director · Information Services – Danna Kittikrishnan, Director

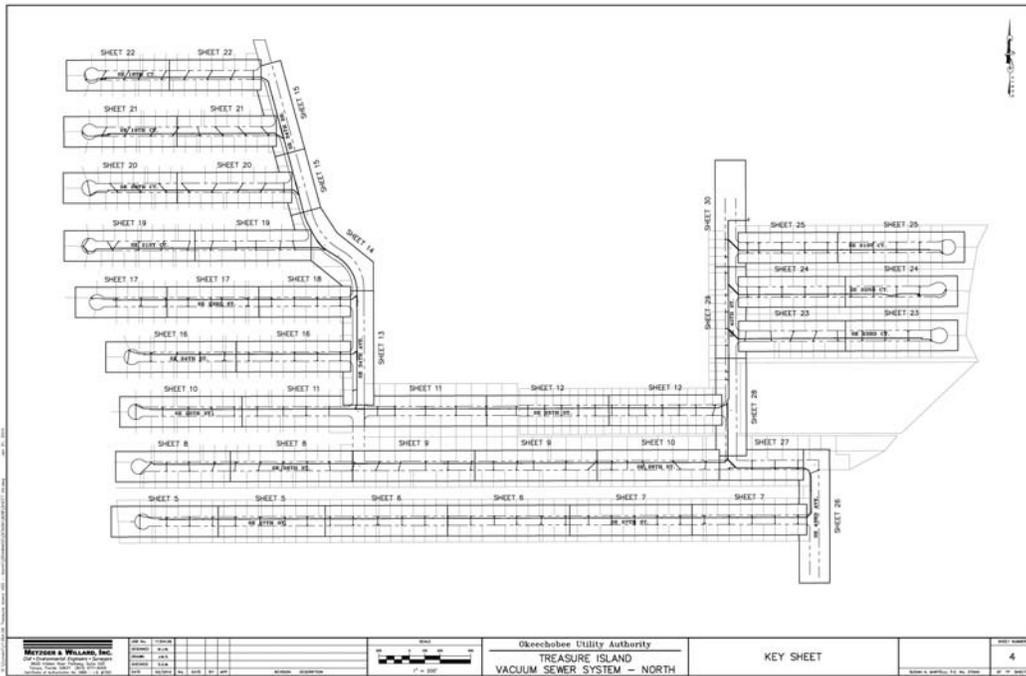
[www.myflorida.com/dor](http://www.myflorida.com/dor)  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0100

**Attachment B – Okeechobee County Average Taxable Property Values**

# Additional Proposal Information

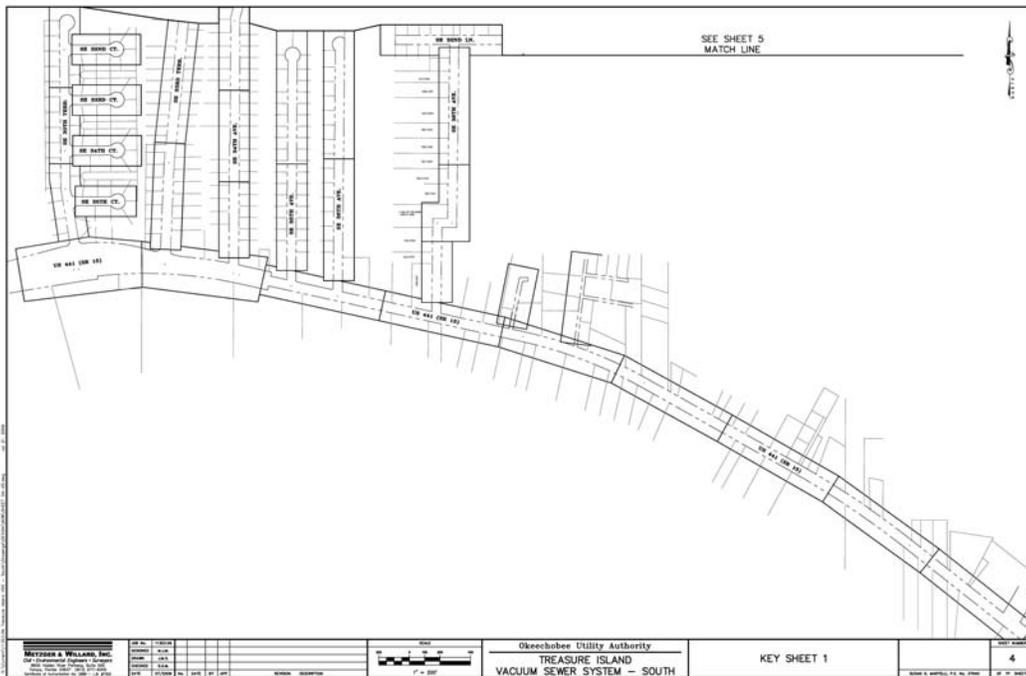
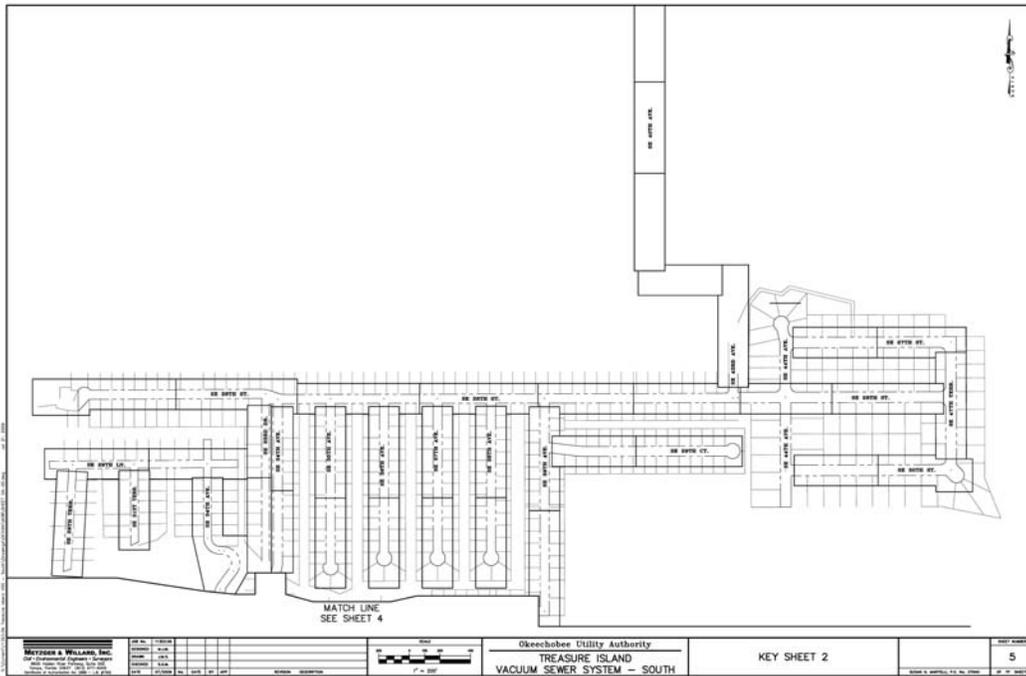
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**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment C.pdf**



**Treasure Island North Vacuum Sewer – Sheet 1**

**Attachment C – Treasure Island System Layout**



**Treasure Island South Vacuum Sewer – Sheet 2**

**Attachment C – Treasure Island System Layout**

# Additional Proposal Information

(This is as uploaded, a blank page will show if nothing was submitted)

**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment D.pdf**



## SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

December 15, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5th Avenue  
Okeechobee, FL 34974

**Subject: Treasure Island Vacuum Sewer System and East Side Force Main Project**

Dear Mr. Clay:

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) understands that the Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) is seeking a grant under the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) 2014 for the Treasure Island Vacuum Sewer System and East Side Force Main Project. The SFWMD is submitting this letter to indicate that the proposed septic to sewer project is included in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan and it supports the goals of the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

The Watershed Protection Plans associated with the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (373.4595 Florida Statutes) identified failing septic tanks as a contributor to degraded water quality and includes septic to sewer conversion projects as measures to improve water quality. The Okeechobee Utility Authority Treasure Island Vacuum Sewer System and East Side Force Main Project, to remove the dependency of septic systems in this area, was included as a specific management measure in the 2014 update to the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan to help improve the quality of water entering Lake Okeechobee. The Treasure Island development is located in the Taylor Creek Nubbin Slough Sub-watershed which drains to Lake Okeechobee and is a priority area for water quality improvements due to elevated levels of nutrients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lennart J. Lindahl".

Lennart J. Lindahl, P.E.  
Assistant Executive Director

LJL/lb

c: Lesley Bertolotti, SFWMD  
Mark Elsner, SFWMD  
Beth Lewis, SFWMD  
Jeff Sumner, SFWMD  
Tom Teets, SFWMD

# Additional Proposal Information

(This is as uploaded, a blank page will show if nothing was submitted)

**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment E.pdf**



BILL NELSON  
FLORIDA

December 10, 2014

Assistant Secretary Jo Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Works  
Department of the Army, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, Northwest  
Washington, District of Columbia 20314-1000

**RE: Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014**

Dear Secretary Darcy:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the Okeechobee Utility Authority's efforts to obtain a federal grant. The goal of their proposed project to conduct a feasibility study and to protect the Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystems. I respectfully request your consideration of this organization's application for federal funding.

The Okeechobee Utility Authority would act as the non-Federal sponsor for this project, providing for the removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks and associated drain fields and several small wastewater package treatment plants which impact both environmental and aquatic ecosystems. If funded, the project will seek to remove nutrients and bacteria as well as water quality impacts from the septic tank/package treatment plant discharges, improving overall water quality and allowing for native submerged plants to thrive. This project supports the goals and objectives of several State agencies, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers, which have made the protection of the headwaters, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades system a priority.

Again, I encourage your consideration of this worthy cause. If I can be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below.

Sincerely,

BN/jm

CC: Ms. Michelle McGovern, Regional Director, U. S. Senator Bill Nelson

# Additional Proposal Information

(This is as uploaded, a blank page will show if nothing was submitted)

**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment F.pdf**

## Attachment E – Letter of Support Hon. Senator B. Nelson, Florida



Economic Council of Okeechobee  
Post Office Box 718  
Okeechobee, Florida 34973  
(863) 467-0200  
www.ecok.org

December 19, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, FL 34974

RE: Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project

Dear Mr. Clay:

The Economic Council of Okeechobee supports the efforts of the Okeechobee Utility Authority to complete the Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project contingent upon the availability of grant funding to cover the total costs of the project.

Our economically-disadvantaged community has already contributed significant funds to this project and our designation as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern necessitates Federal funding to complete the construction of the project.

We recognize the significant impact that removing 1,600 septic tanks and drain fields would have on the environmentally-sensitive ecosystem in the Taylor Creek Watershed near Lake Okeechobee. Tourism and seasonal visitors account for a large portion of Okeechobee's economy, an industry that depends heavily on the health of Lake Okeechobee and its surrounding water bodies.

Completing this project would allow Okeechobee Utility Authority to grow their customer base benefitting the utility through improved operational efficiency. A more-efficient utility would in-turn benefit Okeechobee's economy making the community more attractive to new industry and business.

In addition, the Okeechobee Utility Authority will be able to meet their commitments to developers located in the project area.

For these reasons, and should funding become available, we support the Okeechobee Utility Authority's Lake Okeechobee/Everglades Ecosystem Protection Project.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jon Geitner  
Chairman

Economic Council of Okeechobee

1

## Attachment F – Letter of Support Economic Council Okeechobee

# Additional Proposal Information

(This is as uploaded, a blank page will show if nothing was submitted)

**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment G.pdf**



**THE FLORIDA SENATE**

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

**COMMITTEES:**  
Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities, *Chair*  
Agriculture  
Appropriations  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Health  
and Human Services  
Health Policy  
Transportation

**JOINT COMMITTEES:**  
Joint Administrative Procedures Committee  
Joint Legislative Budget Commission

**SENATOR DENISE GRIMSLEY**

*Deputy Majority Leader*  
21st District

December 31, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, FL 34974

**RE: Federal WRRDA 2014 Grant Funding**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you know I have supported the Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) wastewater projects, even before I became a member of your legislative delegation.

I am aware of your application to the federal Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) Grant Program.

I support and encourage approval of your application for federal financial assistance to remove hundreds of private septic systems through the East Side Force Main Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise Grimsley".

Denise Grimsley  
State Senator  
District 21

DG/mm

**REPLY TO:**

- 205 South Commerce Avenue, Suite A, Sebring, Florida 33870 (863) 386-6016
- 212 East Stuart Avenue, Lake Wales, Florida 33853 (863) 679-4847
- 306 Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5021

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**ANDY GARDINER**  
President of the Senate

**GARRETT RICHTER**  
President Pro Tempore

**Attachment G** – the Honorable FL Senator Denise Grimsley

# Additional Proposal Information

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**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment H.pdf**



**Cary Pigman**  
Florida House of Representatives  
District 55

cary.pigman@myfloridahouse.gov

**Sebring Office**  
205 South Commerce Ave., Suite B  
Sebring, Florida 33870-3626  
(863) 386-6000  
(863) 386-6002 fax

**Okeechobee Office**  
55 South Parrott Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida 34974-2968  
(863) 462-5019  
(863) 462-5023 fax

**Tallahassee Office**  
214 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300  
(850) 717-5055

December 28, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, FL 34974

**Re: Support for Federal WRRDA Grant Funding**

Dear Chairman Clay,

I appreciate the efforts of your Authority to prevent nutrients and polluted septic effluent from entering the Treasure Island waterways that lead into the waters of Lake Okeechobee, the Indian Riven Lagoon, and the Everglades.

I understand that your application to be included in the WRRDA 2014 will provide for removal of many private septic systems and the East Side Force Main Project. As you know I have been working to provide assistance to OUA in your wastewater projects, however, state funding being limited your Federal Funding Grant search is commendable.

Because the Treasure Island project is located in the Nubbin Slough Sub-watershed and drains into Lake Okeechobee I offer this letter in support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cary Pigman".

Cary Pigman  
Representative, District 55

Health Quality Subcommittee, Chair;  
Civil Justice Subcommittee; Health & Human Services Committee;  
Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee; Local Government Affairs Subcommittee

**Attachment H** – the Honorable FL Representative Cary Pigman

# Additional Proposal Information

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**USACOE Request Letter dtd 092315 Attachment I.pdf**

**Board of County Commissioners**  
Okeechobee County



304 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street-Room123  
Okeechobee, FL 34972  
(863)763-6441 x1

November 24, 2014

Mr. Tommy Clay, Chairman  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, FL 34974

RE: Water Resource & Development Act Grant

Dear Chairman Clay:

The Okeechobee Board of County Commissioners is pleased to submit this letter of support, on behalf of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, regarding the Water Resources Reform & Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014) for removal of approximately 1,600 septic tanks in the Treasure Island area of the Taylor Creek Watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryant H. Culpepper".

Bryant H. Culpepper  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman – District 2

Vacant  
District 1

Bryant H. Culpepper  
District 2

Frank Irby  
District 3

Terry Burroughs  
District 4

Margaret Garrard Helton  
District 5

**Attachment I** – the Board of Okeechobee County Commissioners