

## City of Sanibel

800 Dunlop Road  
Sanibel, Florida 33957-4096

[www.mysanibel.com](http://www.mysanibel.com)

AREA CODE - 239

CITY COUNCIL	472-4135
ADMINISTRATIVE	472-3700
BUILDING	472-4555
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	472-3111
FINANCE	472-9615
LEGAL	472-4355
PARKS & RECREATION	472-9075
PLANNING	472-4136
POLICE	472-3111
PUBLIC WORKS	472-6397
UTILITIES	472-1008

January 10, 2006

The Honorable Jeb Bush  
Governor, State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Bush:

I hope it will be possible for you to meet with the Mayors from Southwest Florida to discuss short-term solutions to a critical problem threatening our economy and environment.

Water releases from Lake Okeechobee are jeopardizing our two billion dollar tourism industry as well as our real estate values.

The most recent survey conducted by our Tourist Development Council asked what tourists liked most about visiting our area. Two years ago, in November 2003, 88.8% responded "beaches." This past November 2005, only 70.6% responded "beaches," -- an alarming 18% drop. When visitors were asked what they liked least two years ago, water quality did not even register. This past November 2005, 9.6% of tourists said that water quality was what they liked least. It ranked above insects and traffic congestion.

The Lake Okeechobee releases are killing over 10,000 acres of sea grasses, producing brown water and sea turtle sized "scum balls." None of this is inviting for tourists or for those who own property here. In addition, the loss of sea grasses disrupts fish spawning, affecting both the fishing and boating industries as well as the food supply for the shorebirds that tourists enjoy. These discharges elevate levels of nitrogen and phosphorus nutrients in our estuaries, a critical habitat to manatees and sea turtles.

We appreciate your efforts to shorten the schedule for long-term Everglades restoration. However, given current circumstances, we are concerned that neither our environment nor our economy can endure another 2-4 years of Lake Okeechobee water releases.

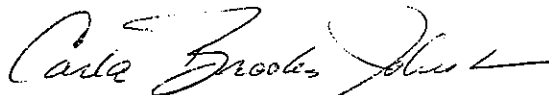


We need to find better short-term solutions to handle the Lake Okeechobee release decisions. It would be devastating to do lasting harm to the Southwest Florida environment and economy.

We are asking that you meet with the Mayors of the communities in our area impacted by these water releases so that we can discuss this crucial matter directly with you. Because the critical growing season for the sea grasses is about to begin, we hope this meeting can occur within the next few weeks. We are willing to travel to Tallahassee to meet at your convenience.

Please do not hesitate to have your staff contact me at Sanibel City Hall at (239) 472-3700, to arrange a meeting date and time.

Cordially,



Carla Brooks Johnsten  
Sanibel Mayor

Xc: Sanibel City Council  
The Honorable Jim Humphrey, Mayor, City of Fort Myers  
The Honorable Garr Reynolds, Mayor, Fort Myers Beach  
The Honorable Eric Feichthaler, Mayor, City of Cape Coral  
The Honorable Jay Arend, Mayor, City of Bonita Springs  
The Honorable Bill Barnett, Mayor, City of Naples  
The Honorable Stephen Fabian, Jr., Mayor, City of Punta Gorda