

**A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL TO URGE THE U.S. ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO SELECT AN ALTERNATIVE FOR
THE DECOMPARTMENTALIZATION PROJECT THAT
ACHIEVES ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES AND THAT FULLY
CONSIDERS THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL
BENEFITS TO FLORIDA BAY AND THE FLORIDA KEYS**

December 11, 2007

WHEREAS Florida Bay is part of Everglades National Park, one of America's most unique and fragile natural treasures; and

WHEREAS the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) helps protect the unique marine waters of the Florida Keys that are a national treasure and of international significance; and

WHEREAS the flora and fauna of Florida Bay and the Florida Keys have suffered devastating effects resulting from a system of 1,400 miles of canals and levees to divert natural water flows, built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to control flooding and provide water supply for an ever-increasing population; and

WHEREAS fish and wildlife populations are under significant stress within Florida Bay and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary because the "River of Grass" has been drained and diverted through so many canals that it no longer supports the web of life that depends upon it; and

WHEREAS the total economic value of fishing in Florida is valued at approximately \$9 billion, much of it driven by the fisheries in Florida Bay and the FKNMS; and

WHEREAS the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan of 2000 (CERP) always intended to provide significant environmental benefits to the Florida Keys and Florida Bay; and

WHEREAS the Decartmentalization Project of CERP is widely considered to be the heart of Everglades restoration by eliminating barriers to natural water flow and improving the ecological connectivity throughout the entire Everglades system, including Florida Bay, and if implemented correctly will provide critical environmental and economic benefits to Florida Bay and the FKNMS;

**NOW THEREFORE, THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL RESOLVES AND RECOMMENDS:**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District should:

- Ensure the selected Alternative for the Decompartmentalization Project achieves the environmental objectives outlined in the Plan adopted by the U.S. Congress in 2000.
- Consider the economic and environmental effects to Florida Bay and the Florida Keys in selecting an Alternative for the Decompartmentalization Project of CERP.
- Balance any socio-economic and environmental cost/benefit analysis of restoration impacts on the canal fisheries, specifically the bass fishery of the L-67, with a similar cost/benefit analysis of restoration impacts for Florida Bay and the Florida Keys marine industries, especially the commercial and recreational fishing industries.

Passed unanimously on this date: December 11, 2007.

The Council is an advisory body to the Sanctuary Manager. The opinions and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.