

Resolution of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
Regarding Water Usage
August 21, 2007

Whereas, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary was established by President George H. Bush in 1990, and

Whereas, the legislation creating the FKNMS found that adjacent to the Florida Keys land mass are located spectacular, unique, and nationally significant marine environments, including seagrass meadows, mangrove islands, and extensive living coral reefs, and

Whereas, these marine environments support rich biological communities possessing extensive conservation, recreational, commercial, ecological, historic, research, educational, and aesthetic values which give this area special national significance, and

Whereas, these environments are the marine equivalent of tropical rain forests in that they support high levels of biological diversity, are fragile and easily susceptible to damage from human activities, and possess high value to human beings if properly conserved, and

Whereas, the south Florida region not only is home to the Everglades and the world's third largest coral barrier reef, but it shelters more than 6 million full-time residents and attracts millions of seasonal visitors annually with nearly 4 million traveling to the Keys alone each year, and

Whereas, the EPA states that "The Everglades and other south Florida ecosystems already are stressed by the pressures of human development, with global warming adding additional stresses, such as higher water levels, increased salinity and warmer temperatures, and

Whereas, Florida's estuarine and marine environments are an important "engine" of the region's economic prosperity generating nearly 40,000 jobs annually in Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward Counties, and producing nearly \$3.4 billion in income and sales, and

Whereas, these estuarine and marine environments are connected to and dependant on the Everglades landscape for sources of fresh water and other components associated with freshwater runoff to estuarine and marine systems, and

Whereas, poorly planned water management decisions in the Everglades region have resulted in past damage and loss of ecological integrity in estuarine and marine systems within, and

Whereas, The CERP is an \$11 billion civil works project funded jointly by a state/federal partnership that is designed to restore natural quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water to the entire greater Everglades region including Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay and the Florida Keys and

Whereas, for the purposes of the FKNMS and Protection Act the term “adverse effect” means any factor, force, or action that would independently or cumulatively damage, diminish, degrade, impair, destroy, or otherwise harm any of those qualities, values, or purposes for which the Sanctuary is designated, and

Whereas, it is consistent with the FKNMS and Protection Act for local, state and federal agencies to cooperate with the FKNMS Advisory Council, charged with providing recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Commerce on actions necessary to provide for the protection of the marine resources of the Florida Keys, in addressing adverse effects over which those agencies have jurisdiction, and

Whereas, the human populace of the south Florida regions is currently under significant water restriction, and

Whereas, Everglades Restoration is ongoing and will require all of the water that is currently going to tide,

Therefore, the FKNM SAC requests that when future water use issues present themselves, the superintendent of the FKNMS advise applicable agencies that Everglades restoration and existing residential water use take precedence over major water use requests (e.g. power plants, water parks, golf courses) during state and federal permitting processes.

Passed unanimously on this date: August 21, 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.