

A RESOLUTION
OF THE
FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (Sanctuary) is an ecosystem of statewide and national significance, including mainland America's only living barrier coral reef and the largest documented semi-continuous seagrass bed on earth; and

WHEREAS, the health of the Florida Keys coral reef ecosystem is dependent upon clear, low-nutrient waters, and

WHEREAS, the Sanctuary is the nation's most visited national marine sanctuary and its boundaries encompass John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Florida's most visited state park; and

WHEREAS, the federal government and the State of Florida are directed by Public Law 101-605, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Protection Act of 1990, to develop a comprehensive Water Quality Protection Program for the Sanctuary to "restore and maintain" the water quality, coral reefs, and other living marine resources of the Florida Keys environment; and

WHEREAS, the National Marine Sanctuaries Program Amendments Act of 1992, H.R. 5617, require that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Florida implement the Water Quality Protection Program in coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

WHEREAS, technical studies have shown that the existing wastewater management facilities in the Florida Keys, including cesspits, conventional septic systems and package plants, are inadequate and have resulted in degradation of the semi-confined and adjacent near shore waters; and

WHEREAS, scientific studies demonstrate that the ebb and flow of the daily tidal cycle results in a tidal pumping phenomenon that drives the relatively rapid exchange between ground and surface waters; and

WHEREAS, federal, state, local government, businesses and community organizations are working to restore water quality in the Florida Keys, which has a favorable effect on the environment and economy of Monroe County; and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee for the Water Quality Protection Program of the Sanctuary seeks to coordinate federal, state and local wastewater and storm water management initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan (1997) mandated nutrient loading levels be reduced in Monroe County by the year 2010; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the Florida Governor issued Executive Order 98-309 that directed local and state agencies to coordinate with Monroe County to implement the Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan and eliminate cesspits, failing septic systems, and other substandard on-site sewage systems; and

WHEREAS, Section 6, Chapter 99-395, Laws of Florida, sets statutory effluent and disposal standards and associated compliance schedules for existing and new wastewater treatment systems in Monroe County. These standards address treatment for several water quality constituents and require best available technology (BAT) standards for onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems and sewage treatment facilities with flows less than 100,000 gallons per day (gpd), and advanced wastewater treatment (AWT) standards for sewage treatment facilities with design flows greater than or equal to 100,000 gpd. All existing wastewater treatment facilities and onsite systems must be upgraded to either BAT or AWT effluent standards by July 1, 2010, while new or expanded sewage treatment facilities must meet the requirements at the time of permitting; and

WHEREAS, under authority of Public Law 106-554, the Florida Keys Water Quality Improvements Program, dated December 21, 2001, the Army Corps of Engineers is authorized to provide up to \$100,000,000 in technical and financial assistance to carry out projects for the planning, design and construction of treatment works to improve water quality in the Sanctuary. This Act requires a 35% local government funding match to improve poorly functional or non-existent wastewater and storm water infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the City of Layton has completed its \$5.7 million wastewater management system, which includes Long Key State Park, and connections are nearly complete. This project was funded with a \$3.35 million grant from the State Legislature and local match; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Islamorada has completed the North Plantation wastewater treatment plant utilizing State grants totaling \$10.3 million, a Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan of \$4.6 million, and a Federal Emergency Management agency (FEMA) grant of \$1.8 million. This plant is in operation and the Village is considering various options for expanding the service area; and

WHEREAS, the Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District (KLWTD) has completed the Key Largo Trailer Village/Key Largo Park wastewater management system utilizing State grants totaling \$3.7 million, a CWSRF loan of \$0.9 million, and a FEMA grant of \$5.2 million. This plant is in operation and the KLWTD is currently expanding this system to serve the northern half of Key Largo utilizing a State grant of \$6.038 million, \$20 million from Monroe County, and local match. **The total cost for this expansion is estimated to be \$54.5 million;** and

WHEREAS, the City of Marathon has completed the Little Venice wastewater management system utilizing an EPA grant of \$4.328 million, State grants totaling \$3.4 million and local match. Marathon is also currently constructing the wastewater management system for the Sombrero Beach area using State grants totaling \$8.1 million and a CWSRF loan currently at \$8.7 million. The total cost for this system is estimated to be \$25.7 million.

Marathon has advertised for bids for the design and construction of a wastewater management system for the Coco Plum area and the total cost for this system is estimated to be \$11.5 million; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County has completed the Bay Point wastewater management system utilizing a FEMA grant of \$3.0 million. This plant is in operation and the County is considering the service area to include Saddlebunch Key. Monroe County has also begun construction of the Big Coppitt wastewater management system utilizing a \$10.962 million State grant and local match. The total cost for this system is estimated to be \$32.5 million; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has only appropriated a total of \$7,158,000 for the Florida Keys Water Quality Improvements Program that was authorized for \$100 million.

IT WAS RESOLVED BY THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Hereby requests that the President of the United States and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers include in the FY 2009 Budget significant and meaningful funds that were authorized by Congress in the Florida Keys Water Quality Improvements Program, Public Law 106-554, so that restoration of the near shore waters can proceed in a timely and effective manner.

2. Hereby urges the Congress of the United States to appropriate significant and meaningful funds that were authorized in the Florida Keys Water Quality Improvements Program, Public Law 106-554.

3. Hereby urges the Florida Legislature to appropriate to the Florida Keys significant and meaningful funds for required wastewater and necessary storm water infrastructure upgrades.

Approved by the Water Quality Protection Program Steering Committee on July 16, 2007*.

* Note that some members of the Steering Committee representing federal government agencies abstained from voting on this resolution. Those member agencies abstaining from the vote are indicated by an "X" on the attached list of Steering Committee members.