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November 10, 2021

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314
Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon

Office of Management and Budget
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500
Shalanda Young, Acting Director

Dear General Spellmon and Director Young:

As you continue to work on the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Justification for the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), I urge you to request \$850,000 for the management of hydrilla and other invasive species in Lake Seminole.

Lake Seminole is a treasure in southwest Georgia providing recreational opportunities such as boating, camping, hunting and a world-class fishing experience. The lake is also a primary economic generator for the entire surrounding region, which has experienced significant poverty for many years. The counties in Georgia that surround Lake Seminole have been identified by USDA as areas of persistent poverty, including Seminole, Decatur, Baker, and Early counties.

Unfortunately, uncontrolled growth of hydrilla has significantly deteriorated the condition of the lake in recent years. According to USACE's 2021 Aquatic Pesticide Application Plan (Pesticide Application Plan), as much as 60% of the lake's 37,000 acres has been impacted with aquatic vegetation growth.¹

In Fiscal Year 2021, USACE was allocated a little more than \$200,000 for hydrilla and other invasive species in the Operation and Maintenance account for the Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam. The current budget allows USACE to only treat about 1,229 acres, despite nearly 22,000 acres of the lake impacted by nuisance levels of hydrilla and other invasive species. This is wholly inadequate to properly manage aquatic weed growth in Lake Seminole.

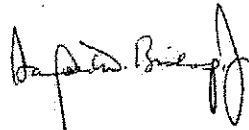
The biological invasion of hydrilla in Lake Seminole has been exacerbated by climate change in recent years. In 2018, Hurricane Michael ravaged the Southeast and destroyed three pond barriers for grass carp that eat hydrilla. These pond barriers have yet to be fixed. These issues have been further compounded by the coronavirus pandemic. As of early October, only 600 acres

¹ <https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Portals/46/docs/recreation/OP-LS/2021%20Woodruff-Seminole%20Annual%20Aquatic%20Pesticide%20Application%20Plan.pdf>

of the lake have been treated this fiscal year, less than half the acreage set forth in the Pesticide Application Plan. We must take adequate steps to address the funding issues for Lake Seminole immediately.

I therefore respectfully urge you to request \$850,000 in your Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Justification for management of hydrilla and other invasive species in Lake Seminole so that USACE has the financial resources needed to properly manage this issue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress