

1923

To the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund,  
Commissioners of Everglades Drainage District, and  
Members of the House and Senate:

State Capitol:  
Tallahassee, Florida.

Gentlemen:

We, the undersigned land owners in the lower Everglades of Florida, owning in the aggregate of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ acres, which is practically all the lands owned by individual firms or corporations outside of the ownership of lands in the lower Everglades held in Trust by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and embraced in the Everglades Drainage District, respectfully call your attention to the following:

First: That we have been paying drainage taxes on our lands since the Everglades Drainage District was created by the Acts of the Legislature of Florida: that no drainage canals have been constructed or planned to be constructed or provisions made for the construction thereof in that portion of the Everglades Drainage District in which our lands are embraced.

Second: That at the time of the inception of the Everglades Drainage project and the creation of the District there was shown on a map duly authorized, accepted and adopted by the Commissioners of the Everglades Drainage District, four (4) main drainage canals: (See Senate Doc. 89 - 62nd Congress; 1st Session; Insert Map between pages 120-121)

Canal "A", North New River Canal (which has since been constructed.

Canal "B", South New River Canal which has practically been completed.

Canal "C", Miami Canal. Provision for construction of same has been made.

Canal "S", Hillsboro or West Palm Beach Canal which has been constructed.

Canal "E", a canal to start at some point on the Gulf of Mexico and tap the very basin of the Everglades by running north or north-east.

This latter canal has never been undertaken, although millions of dollars have been spent elsewhere in the Everglades Drainage District in canal construction and also in spite of the fact that this latter canal would tap the very basin of the Everglades

drainage, and perhaps do more drainage than any of the canals constructed, under construction or contemplated at this time.

Third. We have annually been paying drainage taxes on the belief that provision would be made to construct the canal named, and we would respectfully call your attention to the Randolph Drainage Report, provided for by the Legislature of 1913, paid for by an appropriation made therefor and which provides for a number of canals in the southern portion of the Everglades, none of which have been undertaken, or at this time, to our knowledge, contemplated. (See Senate Doc. 379, 63rd Congress, 2nd Session. Insert Map between pages 12 and 13.

Fourth. Year after year we pay our drainage taxes under the above conditions and we take this method of respectfully calling your attention to the lack of attention in the matter of drainage that our lands and the lands in the lower Everglades have received in the matter of drainage.

We are attaching two maps hereto. Exhibit "A" (See Senate Doc. 89 - 62nd Congress, 1st Session. Insert Map between pages 120-121.) showing the original plan of the drainage of the Everglades - which provides for the Gulf outlet in the lower Everglades of Florida, or canal "EE", as shown by the map. Exhibit "B" (See Senate Doc. 379, 63rd Congress, 2nd Session. Insert Map between pages 12 and 13), being one of the last maps of the Everglades of Florida, issued by the Chief Drainage Engineer of Florida. The latter map, on dotted line, showing canal suggested for construction, and each of these maps clearly develop and show to even the casual observer, the absolute and positive necessity of providing an outlet for the waters collecting in the Everglades Drainage District and collecting in the basin thereof, to the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

THEREFORE, we would most respectfully petition that in the matter of any legislation to be enacted at the session of the Legislature of 1923, that you take cognizance of the above facts and that you provide in any legislation or preparation and passage of any bill effecting the drainage of the Everglades Drainage District that you would recognize the above facts and provide in such legislation authority for the issuing of at least four (4) million dollars worth

of Everglades Drainage District bonds to be sold and the funds derived therefrom to be expended in providing x Gulf Coast outlets for the waters falling and collecting on the lands in the lower portion of the Everglades Drainage District, to convey same to the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

We realize you will not have the time between the date of this Petition-letter and the meeting of the Legislature, to have the Chief Engineer of the Everglades Drainage District go over the ground and prepare the proper Plan and Specification and estimates for the work but you can provide for and authorize the issue of bonds, the proceeds from the sale of which should be used definitely and specifically for the purposes above named.

In authorizing this bond issue we would most respectfully ask that in the face of the fact that our lands, for nearly fifteen years have been bearing drainage taxes without any benefit, that no sinking fund for the retiring of these bonds be created by an additional tax on our lands until the proceeds from the sale of the bonds have been expended on the drainage of our lands produced to the end that the earning capacity of these lands will be established and they then will be able to bear an increased tax burden.

Please be advised that this canal, or the canals, will be of vast benefit to the lands of the Southern Drainage District, especially the western part, thus permitting these lands to be occupied and cultivated by their owners; the further fact that by relieving the flood waters of the Everglades, the Pennsylvania Sugar Company, who have invested several millions dollars, will be immensely benefited, as will all the area bordering on the Eastern edge of the Everglades, and the further fact that the Tamiami trail will be completed within a year and that the Owners of land bordering thereon are all anxious to occupy and cultivate their land and also the further fact that large capitalists have invested in the eastern and southern part of Lee County - all of whom are more than anxious to see this important work done, so that they can occupy their lands.

The situation is entirely different from what it was a number of years ago, when there was really no demand for beginning operations in this area, ~~XXXX~~ of the Everglades, hence I would

request that this work immediately start and be vigorously prosecuted.

We would also most respectfully call your attention to the fact that the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund own more acres of land - in fact the vast majority of the lands remaining unsold in the Everglades are held in trust by the Internal Improvement Fund for the benefit of drainage and the values will be materially increased by the operation of the construction of this Gulf Coast canal or canals, and we would further respectfully ask that a price be fixed by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund on the lands still unsold in the southern portion of the Everglades to protect ourselves, who have for years held our lands, and the original cost of same, plus the general and drainage taxes now exceed the amount at this lands are now being offered and sold for by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, and in the face of the fact that if provision is made, as requested by us in the petition, the valuation of the lands not only owned by ourselves, but also remaining unsold in the hands of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, proceeds from same to be used for reclamation and drainage will be enhanced or increased in value so much that in our opinion, the enhanced or increased value will far exceed the cost of the construction of the canals which we now pray you to authorize bonds for the construction thereof.

We would respectfully represent that the signers of the petition and request, are the bonafide owners of practically all the lands which are not held by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, in the southern part of the Everglades Drainage District, and that we are willing to waive any complaints or grievances that we may now have or may have had in the past by reason of no drainage work being done, accomplished or provided for to the benefit of our lands, provided, that you will comply with the request contained herein and we each and collectively, respectfully petition and pray and believe that the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and Commissioners of Everglades Drainage District will recommend that our request be complied with and that they will instruct their attorney to prepare

the necessary measures to submit to the Legislature and that you, the members of the House and Senate of the State of Florida, will see that justice is done to us and that the bond issue will be authorized and the funds derived therefrom will be expended as requested herein.

By \_\_\_\_\_ Owners of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ acres

By \_\_\_\_\_ Owners of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

By \_\_\_\_\_ Owners of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ Acres

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