



## **BARACK OBAMA AND JOE BIDEN: PROTECTING FLORIDA'S WATERWAYS**

Vice President Gore once stated that “the environment is the economy and the economy is the environment.” In Florida today, that economy and that environment are in trouble. In South Florida, the Everglades restoration project has stalled and now the sole drinking water supply for the region’s six million residents faces long-term sustainability problems. In the Panhandle, the depleting flow of the Apalachicola River threatens the livelihood of Apalachicola Bay’s commercial fishing industry, which is responsible for \$134 million in economic output and an additional \$71 million in value added impacts. In Northeast Florida, the pollution of the St. John’s River is decreasing property values and much-needed property tax revenues. And Florida’s beaches, prime drivers of Florida’s tourism-based economy, have faced repeated closures from contamination.

Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe Florida’s water resources must be preserved and protected or Florida’s economy will bear the cost. Having lived near Lake Michigan for 20 years, Obama has a deep appreciation for the beauty of our water resources and their centrality to our nation’s economy, recreational activities, transportation, and provision of safe drinking water. That’s why he has a long record of supporting our environment and protecting our water resources. As President, protecting these resources will be a priority in his Administration.

### **Restoring the Everglades**

Today, more than half of the famed “river of grass” known as the Everglades has been drained and lost to urban and agricultural development since 1900. Although President Clinton helped forge a Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) to save this unique and vital ecosystem, the Bush Administration has largely abandoned the effort and failed to provide the essential leadership to fulfill the federal government’s part. The federal government had promised to share the restoration cost with the state of Florida, but while Florida has spent \$2 billion, the federal government has spent only \$300 million. If the Everglades are not protected and restored, thousands of eco-tourism, boating, and fishing jobs would be endangered, as would South Florida’s real estate market, which depends on the Everglades as the only source of clean drinking water.

Barack Obama and Joe Biden will make the restoration of America’s Everglades a top environmental priority in their administration. They will honor the federal government’s promise to be a 50-50 partner with Florida to complete the CERP and will provide the national leadership necessary to restore the natural flows of water to Everglades National Park, including

the bridging of Tamiami Trail, and assure that the water flowing to the Everglades ecosystem and Park is fresh and clean. This will not only protect existing jobs, but create new ones in construction, engineering, and the sciences.

Although John McCain has similarly called for restoration, only one candidate has the record to back up their promise. Barack Obama supported the Water Resources Development Act, which would have allocated \$2 billion in federal funding to help Florida restore the Everglades. Senator McCain stood with President Bush and opposed the first federal bill in seven years to fund Everglades restoration, voting against the interests of Floridians concerned with preserving this vital and unique ecosystem. And McCain has vowed to veto all earmarks, when earmarks are the lifeblood of the restoration effort.

### **Resolving the ACF River Basin Disputes**

Florida, Georgia and Alabama have disputed the water allocation of the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers for more than two decades. Attempts at negotiated settlements and previous compacts have failed and devolved into countless lawsuits. To date, the only winners in this dispute have been the lawyers. Rather than continue to waste time and money on further litigation, Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe it is time to provide national leadership on this issue so we can resolve it fairly once and for all.

Obama and Biden would call on the Governors of Florida, Georgia and Alabama to once again convene a stakeholder driven process to reach equitable water sharing solutions. The difference this time would be that Obama would direct the National Research Council (NRC) to conduct a study to assess the water availability, supply options, and demand-management alternatives that factor into ACF River System usage, as well as the impact of freshwater flow on the ecology of the Apalachicola River and Bay. The study would provide the scientific basis for reaching an equitable solution; a solution that protects the drinking water of Atlanta's citizens and provides sustainable flows for productive agriculture in South Georgia and Alabama, and for the fish and wildlife that inhabit Florida's Northwest region and the industries they support. With today's modern data analysis we can provide the factual basis for a real and lasting water sharing plan.

### **Cleaning up the St. John's River**

As the largest northward-flowing river in North America, the St. John's is our very own Nile or Amazon. Yet this national treasure is suffering from unprecedented development and construction that has severely undermined the river's water quality. Many fish in the river are unfit for consumption as a result of this pollution, and the build-up of sediment from riparian construction projects is reducing water depth. Area realtors have estimated that the difference between the vanishing properties with deepwater dockage and those now with shallow dockage can be as much as \$70-80 thousand.

Barack Obama and Joe Biden will establish policies to help high-growth regions like Northeast Florida with the challenges of managing their water supplies. He will restore better federal financing for water and wastewater treatment infrastructure so we can protect the St. John's, and will continue his leadership in protecting our national treasures from threats such as industrial

pollution, water diversion, and invasive species. Barack Obama and Joe Biden support full funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which funds water quality protection projects for wastewater treatment, nonpoint source pollution control, and watershed and estuary management. As president, Barack Obama will improve the quality of our nation's lakes, rivers, and drinking water.

### **Protecting Florida's Beaches**

Florida's wetlands, beaches, coral reefs, fisheries and underground drinking water supplies are also at grave risk. Three South Florida counties alone currently pump well over 300 million gallons a day of semi-treated sewage into outflow pipes that discharge directly into the Atlantic Ocean. Other parts of the state also experience discharge of treated sewage and wastewater into estuaries, lagoons, canals, rivers, and streams. As a result, Florida sea life is disappearing at an alarming rate while oxygen robbing "red tides" and beach closures due to the presence of harmful micro-organisms are frequent. In some areas, contamination of Florida's underground water supply has occurred.

As president, Barack Obama will call for full and stringent enforcement of all applicable laws related to Florida's water resources, including the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act. In addition to required federal monitoring of Florida's water quality, Barack Obama and Joe Biden will encourage federal partnership with the state of Florida and local municipalities in researching new and innovative ways to insure the health and safety of Florida's waters.

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