

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

October 7, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

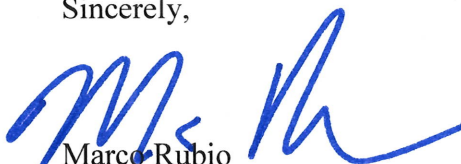
For the last two years, I have worked to support the expedited completion of the Tamiami Trail Next Steps project. This project, which includes approximately 3.3 miles of already constructed bridging, is critical to the implementation of the Central Everglades Planning Project, increasing water deliveries to Everglades National Park, and reducing flooding in the Water Conservation Areas. Last month, the U.S. Department of Transportation jointly awarded the National Park Service (NPS), and the Florida Department of Transportation, a Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program grant that, along with substantial matching support from the State of Florida, fully funds the final phase of the project to raise the remaining unbridged sections of the roadway. I write to respectfully request your assistance to ensure that NPS design work associated with expending these grant funds is completed as quickly as possible.

In particular, I would like to bring your attention to language included in the recently approved Senate Report accompanying the FY20 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. On page nine, under the heading “Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan”, the report states: *“Additionally, the Committee expects the National Park Service to complete and transmit the complete design package for the Tamiami Trail Next Steps Final Phase to the Florida Department of Transportation no later than February 28, 2020.”*

The proposed 2022 completion of the Tamiami Trail Next Steps project will significantly advance improvements in the condition of Everglades National Park’s natural resources, and provide new flexibility for water managers to mitigate significant flooding impacts across South Florida. Your assistance in ensuring that NPS design work related to this project is prioritized for completion prior to February 28, 2020 would greatly improve the likelihood that the project is constructed on time and on budget.

Thank you for your consistent support for Everglades restoration and for your consideration of this request. I look forward to our continued work together on these critical projects for Everglades National Park and Florida.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator

cc: The Honorable Robert Wallace  
Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Mr. David Vela  
Deputy Director, National Park Service

Mr. Pedro Ramos  
Superintendent, Everglades National Park