



JEB BUSH
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

Office of the Governor

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April 28, 2006

The Honorable John Paul Woodley, Jr.
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army
Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon, Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Woodley:

Last night, I received a troubling report from the South Florida Water Management District about the integrity of the Herbert Hoover Dike. I am very concerned about a potential failure of the dike and the enormous impacts such a catastrophe could have on our state.

Hurricanes are a fact of life in Florida. Florida has experienced eight hurricanes – five of them major Category 3 or higher – during the last two years. As we approach the 2006 Hurricane Season, it is critical that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identify solutions to fortify the levee to protect the lives and property of thousands of Floridians in communities around Lake Okeechobee.

Please consider pursuing the following measures:

- Adopt a regulation schedule to keep Lake Okeechobee at lower levels through the hurricane season.
- Remove power poles from the toe of the dike.
- Begin daily inspections of the dike to ensure potential problems are identified early.
- Provide materials, equipment and personnel to make emergency repairs when vulnerabilities are identified.
- Accelerate repairs and rehabilitation currently underway.
- Reevaluate the design of the repairs to ensure they provide adequate protection.
- Develop engineering solutions to strengthen the dike against wave action, storm surges and seepage-related erosion.
- Request congressional authorization to improve the Herbert Hoover Dike to dam standards.
- Provide the best available data and evacuation support tools for hurricane threats to the State Division of Emergency Management.

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I am committed to protecting the people in communities around Lake Okeechobee. My state emergency management team is briefing local officials on the status of the Herbert Hoover Dike next week. Our state team, working with county emergency management officials, will update evacuation plans to reflect this increased risk by the start of hurricane season.

A catastrophic failure of the dike will impact the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Floridians. It would be devastating to our economy, environment and quality of life. While preparing for the impacts of a dike failure is critical to prevent the loss of life, the priority should be preventing such a failure from ever occurring. For the long-term safety of residents and economic vitality of these communities, the Corps of Engineers must provide a permanent engineering solution to vulnerabilities of dike. I urge you to take immediate action to avert a potential disaster.

Thank you for your personal attention to this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeb Bush". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeb Bush

cc: The Florida Delegation
South Florida Water Management District Governing Board
Craig Fugate, Director, Emergency Management
Secretary Colleen Castille, Department of Environmental Protection
The Honorable Clarence Anthony, Mayor, City of South Bay
The Honorable Steve B. Wilson, Mayor, City of Belle Glade
The Honorable J.P. Sasser, Mayor, City of Pahokee
The Honorable David McGee, Mayor, City of Moore Haven
The Honorable Randy Bengston, Mayor, City of LaBelle
The Honorable Mali Chamnes, Mayor, City of Clewiston
Palm Beach County Commission
Glades County Commission
Hendry County Commission