



February 22, 2017

The Honorable Howard Wiggs, Mayor
City of Lakeland
228 S. Massachusetts Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33801

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF LAKELAND'S SE7EN WETLANDS PARK

Dear Mayor Wiggs:

I understand the City of Lakeland wishes to enhance their existing wastewater wetland treatment system by adding the necessary infrastructure to allow for public access to the property and create a public park. On behalf of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), I fully support this endeavor for a number of reasons.

First, as a member of the Tampa Bay Nitrogen Management Consortium, the City of Lakeland Department of Water Utilities has documented nitrogen load reductions to Tampa Bay from this wetland treatment system, which is part of a permitted domestic wastewater facility. The most recent effort to reduce pollutant loadings occurred as a private/public partnership with Tampa Electric Company through the Regional Reclaimed Water Partnership Initiative. The average nitrogen load reduction to Tampa Bay as a result of this project is estimated to be 17.5 tons per year, while also reducing groundwater withdrawals in this region through a unique public/private partnership. These are significant actions that address both water quality and quantity issues within the Tampa Bay watershed.

Second, opening the City's wetland treatment system to the public will allow the opportunity to tell this unique story of environmental protection to your citizens. The City's Se7en Wetlands Park should be publically applauded and appreciated for protecting, restoring and preserving Tampa Bay's water resources through sound-regional partnerships and collaboration. The educational components of the park including signage, displays, interactive models, and classrooms will provide the opportunity to increase environmental outreach in the region, as well. The City's plan to incorporate topics such as conservation, reuse, alternative water supply, wetland functions, and watershed management directly align with the public outreach and stewardship components of TBEP's updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Tampa Bay.

Therefore, I enthusiastically support implementation of this project because it provides a unique opportunity to engage the public in stormwater and wastewater management practices in distant reaches of the watershed that will have lasting and beneficial impacts on downstream water quality to Tampa Bay.

Sincerely,

Ed Sherwood
Senior Scientist

T A M P A B A Y E S T U A R Y P R O G R A M

263 - 13th Avenue South • Suite 350 • St. Petersburg, FL 33701 • (727)893-2765 • FAX (727)893-2767 • www.TBEP.org

POLICY BOARD: HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, MANATEE COUNTY, PINELLAS COUNTY, CITY OF CLEARWATER, CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, CITY OF TAMPA,
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.