



For Immediate Release

August 1, 2019

Lawsuit Filed Over Lake Okeechobee Releases and U.S. Army Corps-Created Water Shortage

Clewiston, Fla. – U.S. Sugar announced today that it shared similar concerns with environmental groups who filed an earlier lawsuit over the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ complete disregard of its own policies and procedures governing Lake Okeechobee. The Company filed a lawsuit this morning in federal district court.

“Since November of 2018, the Corps has released unprecedented volumes of water from Lake Okeechobee, and as a result they’ve recently driven the lake into the water shortage band (which requires the South Florida Water Management District to implement water shortage policies) during the rainy season,” said Judy Sanchez, *Senior Director, Corporate Communications Public Affairs*.

“At low lake levels (13 feet and below), the LORS 2008 schedule instructs the Corps to hold water,” Sanchez said. “By releasing water without preparing a new or updated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and analyzing the full impacts of that release of water on the lake, the people, and the downstream systems that rely upon its water, the Corps of Engineers has broken its own regulations and violated the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) and the *Administrative Procedure Act*.”

Adopted in 2008 as the temporary schedule for managing Lake Okeechobee while the Herbert Hoover Dike was stabilized, the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule was developed over a very transparent, multi-year process. It had extensive input from hundreds, if not thousands of different stakeholders from scientists, fishermen, farmers, urban municipalities, lakeside communities, utilities, tribal leaders, environmental organizations, elected and appointed officials and others.

“It’s not often that farmers join these types of groups in litigation, but when an agency goes rogue and puts Lake Okeechobee and important water resources at risk, we agree the courts need to take control.” Sanchez said.

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Lake Okeechobee Water Level and Management Zones

Today's Stage 11.66

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