

May 14, 2018

Secretary David Gwynn
Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
11201 N. Malcolm McKinley Drive
Tampa, FL 33612

Dear Secretary Gwynn:

Tampa Bay has been recognized as one of the few international examples of a coastal ecosystem in recovery despite continued urbanization and population growth within its watershed. Baywide seagrass coverage continues to expand and now has approached levels commensurate to the extent last observed in the 1950s, a recovery goal set by the community through the Tampa Bay Estuary Program's (TBEP) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. However, periodic setbacks have been observed in some of the Bay's extent, particularly in Old Tampa Bay.

Already, FDOT has shown its support for the Bay's continuing recovery, by modifying the eastern portion of the Courtney Campbell Causeway, resulting in enhanced water quality and important environmental improvements.

Another opportunity exists to benefit the Tampa Bay ecosystem, during the replacement of the Howard Frankland Bridge. If alterations to the western causeway can be made during the bridge replacement project, improved circulation in the Feather Sound area will help reduce harmful algal blooms, improve water quality, and promote seagrass recovery. Seizing the opportunity to alter the causeway during construction of the bridge replacement will further recognize the FDOT as a strong and committed partner in Tampa Bay estuary restoration efforts.

If you have further questions, we encourage you to contact Ed Sherwood, TBEP Executive Director at (727) 893-2765 to discuss a collaborative path forward in investigating and funding innovative and environmentally-beneficial projects that FDOT could pursue.

Many thanks for your consideration of this opportunity.

Sincerely,