



**Sanibel Mayor Kevin Ruane to address Senate Select Committee  
on Lake Okeechobee freshwater releases**

SANIBEL, Fla. (Aug. 19, 2013) – Sanibel Mayor Kevin Ruane will provide testimony on the Lake Okeechobee freshwater releases before the Florida Senate Select Committee on Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin in Stuart, Fla., on Thursday, Aug. 22. The committee is comprised of eight members chosen by Senate President Don Gaetz, including Sen. Lizbeth Benacquisto of Southwest Florida.

Mayor Ruane will testify regarding the significant, detrimental and economic impacts of the high flow regulatory discharges on Sanibel Island and the coastal waters of Lee County; the urgent need for the U.S. Army Corps and South Florida Water Management District to consider all short- and long-term storage options; the necessity of securing federal funding for the C-43 West Basin Reservoir Project and other long-term solutions; and the importance of immediate ecological monitoring to determine the full impacts on the Caloosahatchee estuary.

“Our city’s top priority must be to move the state and federal governments into fully implementing the long-term solutions to the Lake Okeechobee releases,” said Mayor Ruane. “If the past years of rhetoric and debate do not quickly move these capital projects into implementation, we will have squandered our economy and the jobs and property values of every person in Southwest Florida.”

Additionally, Mayor Ruane will address the tremendous economic impact of the releases on the area’s businesses, residents and tourist destinations.

The workshop runs from 1 to 9 p.m. and “will explore short-term solutions or alternatives to reduce or eliminate current releases from Lake Okeechobee,” according to the agenda.

This is the first of an expected four hearings as the committee works toward a Nov. 4 deadline to submit a report of its findings to President Gaetz.

For more information about the Senate committee, visit [www.flsenate.gov/topics/IRLLOB](http://www.flsenate.gov/topics/IRLLOB).

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