

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E., Deputy Executive Director,
Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects 

DATE: July 15, 2010

SUBJECT: Environmental Services Laboratory Construction Project –
Contract Number 4600002161

Background:

The South Florida Water Management District (District) operates and maintains an expansive 1,800-mile water management network of canals and levees, including 29 major pump stations and 200 water control structures, along with another 2,000 smaller structures. As part of this critical operation, the District manages the Ecological and Water Quality Laboratory Facility currently located at 1480 Skees Road in West Palm Beach, Florida. This leased complex is comprised of two primary structures, an accessory support shed and parking lot. It is a State-certified facility that conducts over 150,000 analyses each year in support of legally mandated sampling and permit-required monitoring activities. Water samples from the entire 16 county region that extends from the Kissimmee River Valley to Lake Okeechobee, and to the Everglades Agricultural Area to Florida Bay, are brought to this facility for analysis.

In looking towards the future, the District performed a study that provided recommendations for the future operations of the Ecological and Water Quality Laboratory facility for the next 25 years, and concluded the existing laboratory located at Skees Road lacks many basic necessary components for safe, long-term operation and would require significant unrecoverable capital to cover the cost of the required improvements. Coupled with uncertainties as to the availability of a new long-term lease with the landlord and the lack of space for relocating other District laboratories to this facility, this option has a very low degree of desirability. It was concluded the District's interests are best served by relocating the laboratory to the Field Operations Center (FOC) property. This resulted in the Environmental Services Laboratory Construction Project.

The project includes the construction of a new custom built 36,000-square-foot building that will be state-of-the-art, capable of resisting high wind velocities with limited or no damage, and contain emergency backup systems capable of self-sustaining operation of the building without public electric service. The proposed lab will be sized to allow for the remote laboratory functions, as well as some of the outsourced functions, to be performed under one roof to take advantage of economies of scale by eliminating

duplicate equipment and to allow the Water Quality Monitoring staff to be located together in this new building.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification is also being pursued for this building to comply with Governor Crist's Executive Order and to document the construction of a sustainable, efficient, green building.

How this helps meeting the District's 10-year Strategic Plan:

This project will help the Restoration Sciences Department fulfill its Regional Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Mission by providing the department with an adequate laboratory facility to conduct its required analyses.

Funding Source: This is a 420-day contract with Suffolk Construction Company, Inc., the lowest pre-qualified, responsive and responsible bidder, for construction of the Environmental Services Laboratory in the amount of \$7,870,000, of which ad valorem funds in the amount of \$1,124,285 are budgeted and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of the FY11 budget.

This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography: This item will impact the Everglades Restoration & Capital Projects (ERCP) Restoration Sciences Department by providing the department with an adequate facility to conduct its required laboratory-related activities. The ERCP Construction Department will be responsible for construction management of the contract. The ERCP Engineering Department will be responsible for engineering during construction. Corporate Resources Finance and Administration Department will be responsible for operating and maintaining the building upon completion. Geographically, the area impacted is the east side of the District's Field Operations Center property.

What concerns could this Board item raise? The project will commence construction in FY10 and its completion is dependent on approval of the remainder of the construction budget, requested for FY11.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item? This action is needed to facilitate the District's efficient compliance with legally mandated sampling and permit-required monitoring activities.