Don't give up on Everglades

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South Florida is faced with serious environmental problems. We see the potential of the south part of the state being declared a cancer cluster, the threat of sea level rise and the reduction of water availability for new Floridians. South Florida needs a plan to meet these challenges.

The purchase of U.S. Sugar land is a strong option providing land to clean water for the Everglades and local communities, providing storage, and improving flood protection. Originally the Florida Everglades received its water from the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee and flooded south. Currently, this water is being sent out to tide and causing damage to our estuaries. Some estimate this damage to represent an economic loss of over a billion dollars.

This land purchase can change the dynamics and again flow water south. In the long run this purchase will save money by providing the land necessary to do Everglades restoration, water storage, storm water treatment and flood control. Science indicates that having water on large tracts of South Florida land such as this could improve our aquifers and force out salt water intrusion.

The purchase of this land is essential to protecting our estuaries and our future. The cost of not purchasing this land will lead to not having available options to meet all of these challenges.

The district board needs to move forward and extend the purchase agreement for the U.S. Sugar land.

Drew Martin, chair, Everglades Committee, Sierra Club, Lake Worth

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