

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2008

Dear Senator Obama,

We are writing to express our disappointment with comments made October 17, 2008, by you and your campaign relating to water allocation issues in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) and Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) River basins. As you may know, these river basins serve both Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. While we appreciate your interest in the tri-state water issues, the comments by you and your campaign reflect a lack of understanding of the scope of the problems in the ACF and ACT basins, a lack of understanding of the requirements of the Army Corps of Engineers with regards to the ACF and ACT basins under federal law, and a blatant disregard for the needs of the residents of Georgia.

According to your campaign's statement, you "would direct the National Research Council (NRC) to conduct a study to assess the water availability, supply options and demand-management alternatives that factor into ACF River System usage, as well as the impact of freshwater flow on the ecology of the Apalachicola River and Bay." You also said, "As President, I will make protecting Florida's water resources a priority."

As you may know, the Army Corps of Engineers is required under federal law to update the water control manuals for the ACF and ACT basins and recently announced it would begin doing so in the ACT basin. We are pleased to hear from Secretary of the Army Pete Geren that the Corps is moving forward with updating these manuals, because it will allow the Corps to make smarter decisions in their management of these river systems. We have underscored to him how important this action is. As you also may know such an update would include studies to assess water supply and demand, and environmental management practices for ALL the users and stakeholders in the basins, not just those on the Apalachicola River and Bay. To ask the Corps to ignore its responsibilities under federal law in favor of the residents of Florida is a clear affront to the residents of Georgia.

We have continually worked to get Georgia, Florida and Alabama together and to force the Corps of Engineers to update a 20-year-old Water Control Plan for the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa and Apalachicola -Chattahoochee-Flint River Basins. We have consistently reached out to the Florida and Alabama congressional delegations in an effort to maintain a united federal presence in support of a tri-state agreement.

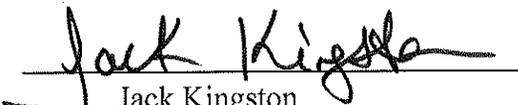
Senator, your recent comments with regards to protecting Florida's water resources simply halts any progress and would furthermore drive a divisive wedge into a fragile coalition. Should your Presidential campaign be successful, we hope that you will revisit your position regarding the ACF and ACT river basins.

From the headwaters of the Chattahoochee in Georgia to the Gulf of Mexico in Florida, we have worked to find a solution that benefits not only the people of our state, but all those who reside in the river basins. It is unfortunate that your comments will likely undo the good work the three states have accomplished thus far.

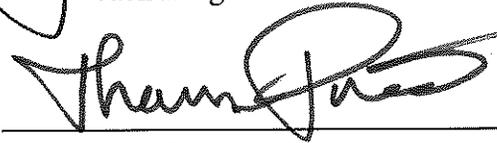
Respectfully,

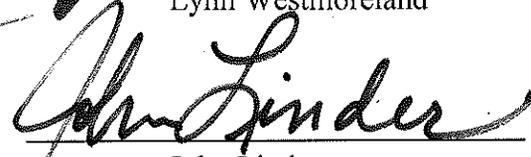

Saxby Chambliss


Johnny Isakson

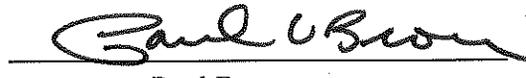

Jack Kingston

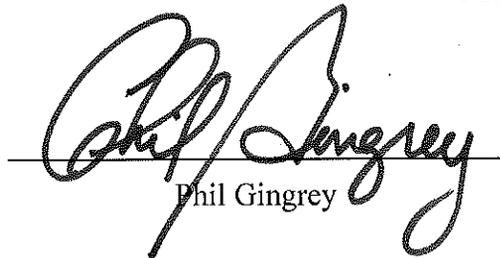

Lynn Westmoreland


Tom Price


John Linder


Nathan Deal


Paul Brown


Phil Gingrey