



PRESS RELEASE

from

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 20--A House subcommittee today approved a \$6 million water control plan for Upper Tampa Bay within two hours after Congressman Sam Gibbons led a Hillsborough County delegation in testifying for the project.

Termed the "Upper Tampa Bay Watershed" project, it is expected to save the County a quarter of a million dollars a year in flood damage.

The Conservation and Credit Subcommittee of the Committee on Agriculture approved the plan that proposes watershed protection, flood prevention and drainage measures for 65,720 acres of land above Tampa Bay.

The project is expected to clear its last hurdle, approval by the full Committee on Agriculture, which will consider the subcommittee's report soon in closed session.

The Committee acted under Public Law 566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, which requires that proposed projects be approved by the Committees in both Houses before Federal assistance can be provided for carrying out projects.

The Senate Agriculture Committee approved the project in the 87th Congress, however, when it came before the House Subcommittee last year, it was not acted upon.

Of the \$6,393,700 to be spent on the project, the federal share of this project will be \$1,859,100, or 29 per cent. The rest is being supplied at a local level.

The plan calls for 65 miles of channel improvements and 43 related grade stabilization structures to lead water away from land subject to periodic flooding.

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From: Congressman Sam Gibbons

UPPER TAMPA BAY WATERSHED--Add 1

The federal money for the project will be made available from funds appropriated to the Department of Agriculture for Watershed work. After work begins, the local organizations plan to complete the project within about six years.

The local sponsors consist of the Hillsborough Soil Conservation District and the Pinellas Soil Conservation District and the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners.

When completed, the project is expected to save Hillsborough County, in direct and indirect benefits, a total of \$249,810 annually. Floods directly cause \$154,200 of damage in this area each year, some 81 per cent of which involves agricultural land and crops.

Gibbons was notified shortly before noon that the Committee had approved the measure. At 10 o'clock, the Subcommittee had heard arguments for the proposal from Congressman Gibbons, Milo Thomas of Tampa, a dairyman; James Bryan of Odessa, cattleman and citrus grower; Henry C. Carlton of Plant City, cattleman, citrus grower and Vice-President of the Hillsborough Soil Conservation District; B. J. Sweat of Balm, citrus grower, truck farmer and member of the Hillsborough Soil Conservation District; and Hon. Rudy Rodriguez of Tampa, Hillsborough County Commissioner.

This is a part of the overall water management program that Gibbons has advocated as a State Legislator and as a Congressman for both this area of Hillsborough County and the overall water management planning for the Central and West Coast area of Florida.