

Joe Negron: Why Are Black South Floridians Not Part Of Discussions?

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Joe Negron](#): Why Are Black South Floridians Not Part Of Discussions?

(By Janet Taylor, Hendry County Commissioner and Chairwoman of #GladesLivesMatter) Joe Negron, Florida's Senate President, recently announced a plan to buy up 60,000 acres of land in the poor, mostly black communities south of Lake Okeechobee.

Should Republican Senator Joe Negron convince legislators to get the state and federal government to spend \$2.4 billion on buying the land, he will need to ask for another \$2 billion to store dirty water coming from wealthy coastal communities.

This plan in the name of Everglades restoration was announced in 2016, not 1916. Sadly, it's a plan designed to benefit the wealthy at the expense of another proud African-American community.

My family has called the region south of Lake Okeechobee home for five generations — which is about four generations longer than most of the transplanted residents living along Florida's coasts.

In recent years, many of these residents, particularly those in Negron's community of the Treasure Coast, have been attacking the people of the Glades region. By unveiling this plan, it's now clear that [Senator Negron](#) has allowed his agenda to be hijacked by the radical environmental activists that have been calling for the purchase of our land for years.

These activists aren't interested in following the science, which shows that 95 percent of the water and the nutrients come from the north of Lake Okeechobee, not the south. In their pursuit of our land, they have called for the destruction of the agriculture industry, the flooding of our fields, and even the unthinkable by suggesting on social media that a Herbert Hoover Dike failure might be the best thing. As someone who lost many family members during the 1928 hurricane and flood, this is truly frightening.

Time and time again, these radical activists have made these threats all in the name of environmental preservation. But what about our preservation?



Joe Negron

While developing the plan, the Republican Senator held meetings with environmental special interests. But he never stepped foot on the land where he wants to store his dirty water.

If given the opportunity to sit down with him, we would have asked our coastal neighbors to understand that this issue should be viewed from a humanistic viewpoint, so the lives impacted by the activists' threats will not be drastically torn apart. We would have also told him that our region is so much more than sugarcane farming. It's also about our hospitals, restaurants, law firms, schools, and community centers, too. It's about farming citrus, green beans, and sweet corn. And on Friday nights, it's always about football.

Going forward, we need to look at other solutions that do not involve destroying our communities. To us, "buy the land" means destroying jobs. For every acre of farmland that is lost, our jobs are lost in the fields, in the factories and in the numerous professions that support farming communities. In turn, this takes food out of our children's mouths and threatens the roofs over their heads.

The attacks on our communities in South Florida are a shame, and taking our land would be a tragedy. Recently, I joined with other black leaders in South Florida in beginning the #GladesLivesMatter movement, because I don't want my children growing up in a state where our livelihoods are constantly threatened. The future black leaders of our communities deserve better.

In this debate, we are asking that state and federal leaders be guided by the facts and the science, not by hate-filled threats from wealthy, coastal elites. Working together, we can protect the environment and the Glades communities. Florida's future depends on it.

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