

GUS M. BILIRAKIS  
12TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
DIGITAL COMMERCE AND CONSUMER  
PROTECTION

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
VICE-CHAIRMAN  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0912**

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
 2112 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0912  
(202) 225-5756  
DISTRICT OFFICES:  
 7132 LITTLE ROAD  
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 34654-5514  
(727) 232-2921  
 600 KLOSTERMAN ROAD  
ROOM BB38  
TARPON SPRINGS, FL 34689-1299  
(727) 940-5860

July 28, 2017

Cissy Proctor  
DEO Executive Director  
107 East Madison Street  
Caldwell Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4120

RE: Funding the Anclote River Dredging Project

Dear Director Proctor:

I write to lend my support for the City of Tarpon Springs' application for consideration under the Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) Growth Fund.

The economic value of the Anclote River is of significant importance to the City of Tarpon Springs, Pinellas County, and the Tampa Bay region at large. According to a 2016 Economic Impact Study, the river services over 150 marine and tourism related businesses, accounting for \$252 million in commerce. These businesses and the river's natural beauty attract more than 1.1 million visitors to Tarpon Springs each year. Additionally, Tarpon Springs accounts for 56% of all commercial fish landed in Pinellas County, which is then distributed throughout the Tampa Bay region.

Unfortunately, silt build up on the riverbed has caused many large boat operators to experience trouble navigating the river. In some areas, the water level is less than three feet deep at low tide. These risks have prevented a significant number of annually-porting vessels from docking at Tarpon Springs to offload their goods, which severely impacts many industries in the Tampa Bay area. Without dredging, the region could see a significant economic downturn for the 150 businesses which rely on the Anclote River, a decrease in tourism, and a shortage of available space for commercial fisherman, who must seek new locations to offload their catch.

For these reasons, I strongly support the City of Tarpon Springs' application for funding the Anclote River Dredging Project. This funding will ensure the County and Tampa Bay region remains a commercial hub and tourist destination for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration and review of this request.

Sincerely,



Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress