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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Federal and state officials meet with Congressman Mark Foley at Herbert Hoover Dike

Pahokee, Fla. – Federal and state officials met with U.S. Rep. Mark Foley on site at Herbert Hoover Dike today, to tour the area and to discuss coordinated plans for ensuring the safety of citizens in the communities surrounding Lake Okeechobee.

“While the dike is a federal structure managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, action is being taken at all levels of responsibility to maintain the integrity of the dike and to ensure that the safety and well-being of people living and working around Lake Okeechobee are not compromised,” said Foley. “We are all working together. This is a joint project – we will get it done, and we will get it done quickly.”

The meeting was called by Foley after a state-commissioned report confirmed earlier studies by the Corps, indicating vulnerabilities in the 140-mile long structure that surrounds Lake Okeechobee. Foley toured the dike by helicopter with George Dunlop, deputy principal assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Col. Robert M. Carpenter, commander of

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the Corps' Jacksonville District, and Carol Wehle, executive director of the South Florida Water Management District. State representative Richard Machek and Dr. Leslie G. Bromwell, one of the authors of the independent report, also attended. The group viewed the construction site where a rehabilitation project to strengthen Herbert Hoover Dike is ongoing.

"The Department of the Army has a long and strong working relationship with the state of Florida," said Dunlop, adding that concerns about Herbert Hoover Dike have been heard loud and clear. "The Corps of Engineers can build anything. When the rebuilding is complete, Herbert Hoover Dike will be strong and better. It will provide one of the highest levels of protection anywhere."

Carpenter stated that it is his agency's responsibility to ensure the integrity and safety of the dike, and that it is one that the Corps takes very seriously. "We don't dispute the facts in the report, or that the dike has problems," he explained. "The Army Corps of Engineers is on the job, and we are working hard to safeguard the citizens that depend on us."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will participate with local governments in a series of town meetings, to be held in the communities around the lake next week.

For further information about the Herbert Hoover Dike and Lake Okeechobee, please visit the Jacksonville District web site at www.saj.usace.army.mil.

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