



Cypress Chapter – Izaak Walton League of America

1701 E Atlantic Blvd, Suite 4

Pompano Beach, FL 33060

June 16, 2025

The Honorable James Uthmeier

Attorney General of Florida

The Capitol PL-01

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050

Dear Attorney General Uthmeier,

On behalf of the Cypress Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, I write to express our strong opposition to your recently announced proposal to construct an immigrant detention facility — referred to as “Alligator Alcatraz” — on Miami-Dade County land within the Everglades ecosystem.

This proposal stands in stark contrast to the very purpose for which this land was protected. The site in question, encompassing the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport, lies within the heart of the Big Cypress Swamp — a critical component of the greater Everglades. This landscape was spared from destruction in the 1970s when citizens, sportsmen, Native American tribes, and conservationists successfully fought to halt the construction of the Everglades Jetport. That same effort led to the establishment of **Big Cypress National Preserve** in 1974, the first preserve of its kind, specifically created to protect the region’s ecology while allowing for traditional and recreational uses.

The proposed detention facility not only disregards this conservation legacy, it would introduce intensive, incompatible uses — including high-volume vehicle traffic, increased aircraft operations, human infrastructure, and security logistics — into a fragile and wild environment. This area is neither prepared nor intended for such use, and we are gravely concerned about the impacts on wildlife, water quality, cultural values, and long-standing access for responsible public use.

The Cypress IWLA has spent decades working in partnership with agencies, Tribes, and the public to preserve the Everglades and promote thoughtful land stewardship. We ask that you reconsider this proposal and instead join us in protecting this remarkable landscape — not exploiting it.

Thank you for your service to the State of Florida. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and would gladly invite you to visit Big Cypress with us and see firsthand the land so many have fought to protect.

Sincerely,

Mike Elfenbein

Executive Director

Cypress Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

MikeE@CypressIWLA.org

cypressiwla.org