

2008 Coastal Federal Legislative Agenda

On this the 20th day of February, 2008, the Galveston County Commissioners Court, in Galveston County, Texas convened in a regularly scheduled meeting with the following members thereof present:

Hon. James D. Yarbrough,	County Judge;
Hon. Patrick F. Doyle,	Commissioner, Precinct No. 1;
Hon. Bryan M. Lamb,	Commissioner, Precinct No. 2;
Hon. Stephen D. Holmes,	Commissioner, Precinct No. 3;
Hon. Kenneth Clark,	Commissioner, Precinct No. 4;
Hon. Mary Ann Daigle,	County Clerk;

when the following proceedings, among others, were had, to-wit:

Whereas, America's, and specifically, the beaches of Galveston County, Texas are home to some of the nation's most precious natural resources. Beyond their intrinsic natural beauty, healthy beaches provide effective storm damage protection, offer residents and visitors unequalled recreational opportunities, and provide unique environmental habitats. Together with coastal wetlands, bird sanctuaries, estuaries, ports, intra-coastal waterways and other resources, our coastal regions are economic engines filled with recreational opportunities and environmental treasures that deserve to be preserved and protected. America's beaches are major tourist destinations for millions of domestic and foreign visitors, providing jobs and business profits which, in turn, produce billions of dollars in tax revenue for the federal government; and

Whereas, the devastation caused by hurricanes and severe weather underscores the need to invest in our nations water resources infrastructure, including shore protection projects; and

Whereas, nearly 60 percent of all Americans live within 50 miles of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Gulf of Mexico, and the five Great Lakes; and it is imperative the federal government acknowledge its role and responsibility for continued support of our nation's public shores and beaches; and

Whereas, the past half century has demonstrated that beach nourishment works as a means of repairing erosion, storm damage protection and providing recreation while providing at least \$4 in national economic benefits for every \$1 of federal money spent.

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved that Galveston County acting through it's Commissioners Court calls upon federal legislators to help enact Galveston County's 2008 Coastal Federal Legislative Agenda including the following funding initiatives:

- Support increased funding for studies and beach restoration projects throughout the nation and specifically the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Shoreline Erosion Feasibility Study in an amount no less than \$600,000 for FY2009, and urges the Administration to include that in its budget recommendations. If the Administration does not recommend adequate funding for these studies and projects, Galveston County respectfully reminds Congress that it is essential that priority be given to funding the periodic nourishments to which Congress has made a statutory commitment. In addition, Galveston County urges Congress to fund new beach nourishment study and construction starts, and permit projects to move seamlessly from study to design to construction. Current estimates state the cost of providing adequate federal funding for all beach restoration projects and studies in FY 2009 to be over \$300 million, which will be matched by over \$175 million from states and localities; and,
- Urges Congress to fully fund the Causeway Railroad Bridge construction project, direct the U.S. Coast Guard to allow the two City of Galveston water lines to be eligible for full federal funding participation, and allow interim fender removal at full federal funding participation; and,
- Support adequate federal funding for shallow draft federal waterways, including the nation's Intracoastal Waterway systems. These waterways are an essential part of the national waterways system, whose users provide significant tax revenues to the federal government; and,
- Support funding for the National Shoreline Technology Demonstration Program ("Section 227 Program") at no less than \$10 million, and the National Shoreline Management Study at no less than \$1 million. Equally important is the need to provide at least \$30 million for the newly-authorized National Regional Sediment Management Program, including funding for studies that had been partially funded previously by Congress under the former Regional Sediment Management Demonstration Program; and,
- Urges Congress to initiate \$1 million in funding for the National Coastal Data Bank. By appropriating \$1 million, Congress can begin a four-year effort to establish an Internet-based home for existing federal, state, and academic institution data on coastal processes; and,

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- **Supports increased funding for FEMA's pre-disaster mitigation program** and urges FEMA to recognize the significant damage mitigation benefits derived from nourished beaches by encouraging coastal communities to restore eroded beaches; and,
- Supports the **completion of the 2005 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment** being conducted by NOAA's Coastal and Ocean Resource Economics Division. Fund **\$400,000 in FY 2009** to complete the 2005 Survey and **\$20,000 to allow NOAA to share the collected economic data** with coastal states; and,
- Supports the creation of a **Water Resources Coalition** to advance federal policies and funding for water resources across the nation. This partnership between leading trade associations, interest groups, corporate interests, and governmental organizations will work with Congress, the Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies to improve the practices and policies impacting the nation's water resources, and to encourage full federal funding for the nation's water infrastructure; and,
- Supports the **re-establishment of a Senate Coastal Caucus** as well as the **strengthening of the House Coastal Caucus** and the **Congressional Waterways Caucus** and will provide each with day-to-day assistance; and,
- Supports the mission of the re-established **Congressional Hazards Caucus** and will participate in the activities of the Congressional Hazards Caucus Alliance, a working group formed to provide information and support to Caucus members. Additionally urges coordination and cooperation among the various congressional caucuses concerned with coastal and tourism; and,
- Supports the efforts of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to expand property owner participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Passage of a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) in 2008 so that Congress can return to a biennial schedule of this bill that is critical for the nation's water resources infrastructure; and,
- Urges the inclusion in WRDA of language requiring the Corps of Engineers to give equal weight to the economic benefits of tourism, recreation, boating, and fishing to the region and the nation in formulating beach nourishment projects; and,
- Urges the passage of H.R. 68, which will allow for the Corps of Engineers to recommend to Congress the reauthorization of beach nourishment projects prior to the expiration of their initial 50-year period for federal fiscal involvement.; and,
- Urges the Corps of Engineers to develop guidelines that enable local governments and private homeowner groups to **avoid being penalized** for undertaking interim erosion control activities prior to a pending federal beach nourishment project; and,
- Encourages federal initiatives to develop research in coastal engineering and science; and,
- Supports the development of the **Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)** and urges Congress to pass the **Ocean and Coastal Observation Systems Act (S. 950)**. Enhanced collection and analysis of coastal and ocean data will improve public policy decisions and will also help provide advance warning of hazardous conditions to potentially-affected coastal communities; and,
- Urges Congress to **reauthorize the BEACH Act by passing HR 2537 and S 1506**, and recommends continued investment in protecting beach water quality provided that it includes additional studies of epidemiology to update or improve our understanding of appropriate pathogen; and,
- Supports a multi-agency approach to assess the economic and environmental impacts of beaches and the beach nourishment process including the belief that the level of risk from coastal storms and sea level rise faced by the nation needs to be addressed by a coherent national policy and a multi-year action plan needs to be developed in order to streamline federal efforts to address these; and
- Urges all levels of government to adopt measures to assure that all members of the public have **access to coastal resources** and to encourage development practices that are consistent with natural hazards and local conditions. **In addition, federal agencies such as FEMA and the Corps of Engineers should reward those communities that have adopted such;** and,

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Be it Further Resolved that the Galveston County Commissioners Court issues this Resolution supporting the Galveston County 2008 Coastal Federal Legislative Agenda and seeks the aid and support of its legislative delegation in the passage of these desperately needed programs; and

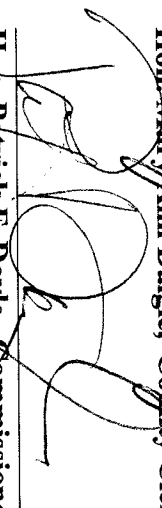
Be it Further Resolved additionally that a copy of this Resolution be spread upon the minutes of this Commissioners Court and that originals hereof be furnished to Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Senator John Corryn, Congressman Ron Paul, Congressman Nick Lampson, Congressman Ted Poe, and Congressman Solomon Ortiz.


Upon Motion Duly Made and Seconded, the above Resolution was unanimously passed on this 20th day of February, 2008.


Attest: Galveston County Commissioners Court, Galveston, Texas


Hon. Mary Ann Daigle, County Clerk

Absent
Hon. James D. Yarbrough, County Judge


Hon. Patrick F. Doyle, Commissioner Pct. 1
& Acting County Judge


Hon. Bryan M. Lamb, Commissioner Pct. 2


Hon. Stephen D. Holmes, Commissioner Pct. 3


Hon. Kenneth Clark, Commissioner Pct. 4