

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Charlie Crist
US House of Representatives
427 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Crist:

As you know, Pinellas County beaches are the backbone of tourism in Pinellas County. In 2015, annual direct spending by Pinellas County beach visitors was \$2.3 billion, total economic impact was \$4.6 billion, and 47,000 jobs were directly supported. Furthermore, spending on beach nourishment in Florida has been shown to deliver \$5.40 of return on every dollar invested.

One of the largest beach nourishment projects in Pinellas County is slated to begin next month. The project, currently estimated to cost \$45 million, has been awarded. It includes filling Sand Key and Treasure Island beaches, but an additional contract option to include filling Long Key's Upham Beach has not been awarded due to lack of federal funds. The Army Corps Jacksonville District needs an additional \$2.1 million in its 2018 work plan to award the Upham Beach option. Awarding this contract option is needed to restore Upham Beach after construction of four new rock structures are completed this July. If the Upham Beach option is awarded, Pinellas has the required non-federal match in hand and the state grant funding covering half the non-federal match. Including Upham Beach in this project will save several hundred thousand dollars of mobilization costs incurred compared to nourishing later under a separate contract.

On behalf of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, and the residents of Pinellas County, please consider requesting that the Army Corps be provided the additional \$2.1 million in their FY2018 work plan so the storm protection benefits can be extended to Upham Beach and to facilitate completing the project in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Sincerely,

KENNETH T. WELCH, Chairman
Pinellas Board of County Commissioners

CC: Members of the Pinellas County Commission
Pinellas County Federal Delegation
Mark Woodard, County Administrator
Jewel White, County Attorney