

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2018

The Honorable R.D. James
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary James,

We want to commend the staff of the Army Corps of Engineers in Jacksonville, Atlanta, and Washington for their work to prepare for the construction of the largest beach nourishment project in Pinellas County, Florida's history. As you know, our beaches are not only critical to the safety of our coastal community and residents, but also provide vital habitat for wildlife. From an economic standpoint, they are the backbone of the County's tourism industry. In 2015 alone, annual direct spending by Pinellas County beach visitors was \$2.3 billion, the total economic impact on the County was \$4.6 billion, and 47,000 jobs were directly supported.

Construction is set to begin later this month on our current project, which is estimated to cost \$45 million. It includes placing 1.34 million cubic yards of sand on the Sand Key segment of our beaches and 300,000 cubic yards on Treasure Island beaches. However, an additional contract option to include placing 150,000 cubic yards of sand on Long Key's Upham Beach segment was not awarded due to the lack of federal funds.

The Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District office has expressed capability for an additional \$2.1 million in its Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Work Plan to award the Upham Beach option. Awarding this option now is needed to restore Upham Beach after the construction of four new rock structures – at state and local expense – is completed in July. If the Upham Beach contract option is awarded, Pinellas has its required non-federal match in hand, as well as state grant funding to cover the non-federal match. Including Upham Beach in this current project will save several hundred thousand dollars in mobilization costs when compared to the prospect of having to nourish it later under a separate contract. It will also produce a complete project just in time for the bulk of the 2018 storm season to provide the greatest possible protection to our residents and infrastructure.

We know that Congress provided in the recently passed Omnibus Appropriations Bill significant additional funds for FY 2018 and we would ask you to include the required \$2.1 million in your FY 2018 Work Plan for the final segment of this project. This will ensure that important storm protection benefits can be extended to Upham Beach, as well as facilitate completion of the project in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. Thank you for your consideration of this urgent and timely request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Charlie Crist
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name being more prominent.

Bill Nelson
UNITED STATES SENATOR

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gus M. Bilirakis". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being the most prominent part.

Gus M. Bilirakis
MEMBER OF CONGRESS