



October 4, 2020

Honorable Commissioner George P. Bush  
Texas General Land Office  
1700 N. Congress Avenue  
Room 330  
Austin, Texas 78701  
*Via Online Upload*

**RE: Letter Supporting Galveston Park Board's CMP Cycle 26 Project of Special Merit Application Entitled:  
"Recovering Access and Restoring Resilience at Stewart Beach Park on Galveston Island"**

Dear Commissioner Bush,

I am sending this letter of support on behalf of the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce to support the Galveston Park Board of Trustee's (Park Board) Coastal Management Program (CMP) Cycle 26, Project of Special Merit (PSM) grant application entitled, "Recovering Access and Restoring Resilience at Stewart Beach Park on Galveston Island." As we understand the application the Park Board is submitting an updated and more comprehensive CMP application for this current Cycle 26 process that has its foundations based in the previous CMP-25 application, whose intent is to eliminate ponding and standing water at Stewart Beach Park. The proposed construction project will provide dedicated ADA pedestrian access walkways to the beach from the parking area (to protect the dunes), create topographical features, contours, swales, ditches and the planting of appropriate native species of vegetation to better manage and control the water coming onto Stewart Beach from multiple sources. We support this effort to increase access and public recreation opportunities at Stewart Beach Park.

The Park Board was recently successful in securing ~\$620,000.00 in additional funding from the City of Galveston Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) for two discrete projects that will greatly enhance this current CMP Cycle 26 PSM application. Cooperation between multiple levels of government to enhance public access and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors is critical for the betterment of the community. This multi-level effort will result in a better project, more efficient use of public resources, and will improve the available public access. This proposed Cycle-26 application stands on the shoulders of the previous Cycle 25 application and has benefited from another year of refinement and increased local complimentary funding.

As President of the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce it is understood by our members that Galveston Island's 7,000,000+ visitors a year expect to be able to access the beach easily, and safely, especially at a public park. Yet, the oldest and most visible beach park on the island offering on-beach parking is experiencing significant issues with ponding/standing water and is negatively impacting the public's access to the beach. Unfortunately, Stewart Beach Park lacks the necessary features to control and re-route periodic heavy rain and run-off from adjacent upland areas. The Park Board has made significant investments to fully fund the initial and updated final engineering and design specifications as developed by Atkins North America. This proposed CMP PSM application, based on the engineered solutions designed by Atkins and complimented by the identified IDC funding is intended to correct the current deficiencies that are restricting access.

Again, I would like to express our support for this worthwhile project. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

  
Gina Spagnola, President & CEO  
Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce