

January 19, 2016

## **To Texas General Land Commissioner George P. Bush, Galveston County Commissioners and Galveston County Judge Mark Henry**

My name is Ted Vega. I am the President of the Gilchrist Community Association. I want to say at the outset that both I and the Gilchrist Community Association, as well as the leadership and members of the Gulf Coast Rod and Reel Gun Club are deeply opposed to your efforts to use eminent domain to take our private land. We will use every legal method at our disposal to prevent this effort.

This community was virtually wiped from the map during Hurricane Ike in 2008. Since that time, we have rebuilt and are working hard to generate economic activity for the benefit of all of our citizens. Rollover Pass has been an unparalleled fishing location for 60 years and generates significant economic value. **Your actions will destroy that value.** A fishing pier and a park will **not** generate economic activity. The reason fishing is popular here is strictly because of the geographic nature of Rollover Pass - a geographic quality that you will destroy, and in so doing, will **destroy this community.**

I remind you that the original bill passed by the Legislature did not require the closure of Rollover Pass. Rather, it authorized the repair **or** the closure of Rollover Pass. I remind you that the construction of a simple jetty system, for far less money than you intend to spend to acquire Rollover Pass and develop the land will address erosion issues and will preserve the economic value of Rollover Pass.

***I repeat, you can achieve your goal of addressing erosion issues with a simple jetty system, and you will preserve the economic benefits to this community.***

I will also point out that there has been a call to restore Rollover Pass to its "original condition." But **nothing** in your plans will do this. In its original condition, Rollover Pass was a low spot that flooded during high tides and storms. In fact, this is the reason for the name. Bootleggers floated barrels of whisky across the flooded areas of Rollover Pass in order to avoid taxes in Galveston. Your park will **not** restore this condition.

Your park is **not** designed to periodically flood and refresh the salinity of Oyster Bay. Your park will **not** restore the original condition of Rollover Pass. What your park and pier will do is seize private land, and destroy the economic value we have worked so hard to restore after Hurricane Ike.

I want to conclude by assuring you that the community will use every legal and political method at its disposal to prevent you from taking our private property. We will use every method possible to make sure that citizens across Texas know what you are doing. We have opened an open records request with the GLO and have begun receiving details of communications to and

from the GLO and Galveston County officials. The GLO believes some communications may be exempt from disclosure, and Attorney General Ken Paxton is currently evaluating our request. We believe he will fully comply with state law to disclose such communications. We will shine the light of day on the quid pro quo arrangement between Galveston County and the General Land Office.

We are fully aware that the GLO is dangling state and federal money in front of you in order to convince you to take our private land. We believe this is a corrupting influence on you. You must ignore the money and respect our private property rights. Texas does not give you the legal right to take our private property merely because you do not like the way we use it. There is no compelling public requirement to seize our land.

We will expose every detail of this as far and as wide as possible. Rest assured, if you continue your efforts, we will do everything to insure that your political career is over and that the people of Texas see what you have done. Your efforts to take our private land will needlessly consume tens of thousands of dollars of Galveston County taxpayers dollars in the form of legal fees.

***Gentlemen, do not take our private land. Cease your hostilities against us immediately.***

Samuel Adams wrote words that you the commissioners, and all citizens here must hear. He said:

“If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen.”

I ask each county commissioner to “Ask not what you can do for the Texas General Land Commissioner George P. Bush but WHAT can you do for Bolivar Peninsula“

**\*\*I tried to read this statement at the Galveston County Commissioner Court meeting on 1/19/16, but was cut off after my allocated three minutes was reached. This was unfair as I waited till all regular court business was done as a courtesy, Commissioner Dennard had all the time he wanted to tell everyone why the county had to do these actions for the “co-operation” with the TXGLO. I would like all people far and wide to hear how we feel,.**

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