

The Honorable _____,

SAVE MY RESERVE, SAVE OUR COASTS

The Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (the Reserve) is a special place here in coastal Alabama that provides much benefit to our local community. The Reserve, part of the system of reserves around our nation's coast, receives funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through legislation in the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). These funds MUST be preserved to continue support for the wonderful things done in all the 29 reserves; and most dear to our hearts, continue support for Weeks Bay Reserve.

The programs at Weeks Bay Reserve ensure that these special places are protected. They provide education and outreach to the community on contributions to the health, economy and quality of life in the places we live. With talk of budget cuts and the elimination of programs like the one at Weeks Bay Reserve, I ask you to make sure you save my Reserve and save our coasts by ensuring the CZMA 315 funds continue to support the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) at the current level of \$23 million for the system.

Our community depends on Weeks Bay Reserve for providing to students, researchers, coastal managers and visitors from far and wide a place to learn about the coastal processes of estuaries, where rivers meet the sea. Estuaries like Weeks Bay are vital areas being the nursery grounds for the seafood we enjoy, fishing grounds and birding rookeries that contribute directly to the economy, and places that remind us all of our cultural heritage. We need Weeks Bay Reserve and we need your support to protect and preserve the funds that operate the Visitor Center and programs that impact so many at the local, state and regional levels here along the Gulf coast.

Weeks Bay Reserve is a place in our state that has real value in improving the economic well-being of our community.

Thank you for your attention and help to preserve funding for the reserves.

Sincerely,