

The Honorable _____,

PLEASE HELP SAVE WEEKS BAY RESERVE IN ALABAMA

Weeks Bay Reserve, founded by the community 30 years ago, is vital in supporting a local healthy economy. It is a place that thrives on marshes and estuaries that provide things we love about the coast like fishing, bird watching, eating the seafood and exploring the wonders of nature. Please protect these special places; protect funding that provides so much for so many; protect the funds that provide this special place to visit, learn, and explore Alabama's coast.

Just this past week, I heard there could be budget cuts that would impact the reserves around the nation like Weeks Bay Reserve here in Alabama. 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. By doing this you will preserve the Reserve here in Alabama and all of the great work done at this site.

You should know that:

- Our reserve is a state-owned property, with state run facilities. It directly benefits coastal Alabama and it belongs to us. The **Weeks Bay Reserve** protects 9,317 acres and is open to public use activities and is home to the Weeks Bay Visitor Center and Resource Center.
- The Weeks Bay Reserve program receives 70% of its operating costs from NOAA each year. Without that funding, the **Weeks Bay Reserve** would have to significantly limit its programs.
- NOAA science, training, and technical support are an essential part of how the **Weeks Bay Reserve** provides value to coastal Alabama. If reserve budgets are reduced or cut, the ability to support reserve programs in coastal Alabama would be significantly impacted or lost.

Thank you for your attention and help keep Weeks Bay Reserve here in Alabama.

Sincerely,