

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 13, 2018

LTG Todd T. Semonite  
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers  
Headquarters  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20314-1000

Dear LTG Semonite:

We commend the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) decision to commit \$16 million, from its Long Term Disaster Recovery Investment Plan, to carry out the South Atlantic Coastal Study at full federal expense. We believe that a study of this magnitude and importance must rely on robust stakeholder engagement. Therefore, we encourage the Corps to ensure that local communities and governments have substantial input into every aspect of the process to deliver sound study recommendations and mitigation project proposals that are desirable and feasible.

Authorized in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016 (PL 114-322), the South Atlantic Coastal Study will yield a critical analysis of coastal vulnerability, protection, and sediment management in one of the nation's most vulnerable regions to hurricane impacts and other shoreline hazards, including sea level rise. This region has also seen significant population growth in the past decade, with more investment and infrastructure value along this coastline than ever before. The results of this study will be critical in enhancing the resilience of coastal communities throughout the region and are eagerly anticipated by many city and county governments who rely on economic activity generated by their beaches, coastal waterways, and port infrastructure.

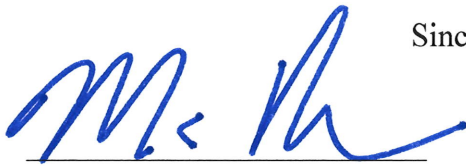
USACE implementation guidance, issued on November 16, 2017 for the South Atlantic Coastal Study, includes the directive that *"[t]he study shall be conducted in coordination with other federal agencies and applicable state, local and tribal officials to ensure that all information, observations and recommendations are consistent with other plans to be developed."* We encourage this coordination to go even further. State coastal managers and officials from shore and beach towns know their coastal needs better than anyone, and they will ultimately be responsible for implementing study recommendations. As such, state, local, and tribal officials should be engaged throughout the study process to ensure the methodology, focus and results are understood and useable by states and communities. USACE should also consult extensively with industry groups, academia, and non-governmental organizations who can provide specialized expertise and coordinate appropriate attention and interest in the study's design and implementation from relevant stakeholders, including coastal state agencies, local officials, and private coastal scientists and engineers.

Additionally, low-lying areas of the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains may face impacts from future sea level rise despite being tens of miles from the shore. It is crucial that the South

Atlantic Coastal Study include analyses of all existing USACE flood control and ecosystem restoration projects within the South Atlantic Division that may be impacted by, or may otherwise mitigate, reasonable, future impacts of coastal change, even if those projects are technically classified as "inland." The Central and Southern Florida Project and projects associated with South Florida Ecosystem Restoration are pertinent examples the USACE must include in a comprehensive South Atlantic Coastal Study.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to receiving regular updates and progress reports as this critical study is developed and carried out.

Sincerely,



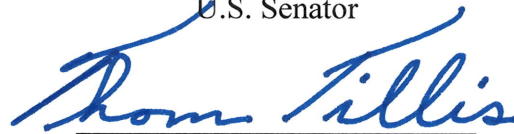
Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator



Tim Scott  
U.S. Senator



Bill Nelson  
U.S. Senator



Thom Tillis  
U.S. Senator

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