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Edward M. Hughes
Tracy O'Connell

CITY OF TYBEE ISLAND

June 22, 2026

The Honorable Adam Telle
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
U.S. Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Assistant Secretary Telle:

I am writing to support Georgia Senator Jon Ossoff's request of June 10, 2026, that a portion of savings realized from recently bid beach nourishment projects in New Jersey be allocated to Tybee Island, Ga., to complete our desperately needed nourishment project on schedule this year.

Time is of the essence: While the USACE Savannah District is ready to move forward this winter as planned with the Tybee Island Shoreline Protection Project, funding must be allocated by the end of July to allow time for procurement and mobilization. Unlike many other beach communities, Tybee has a small window of between December and April to complete the project so as not to interfere with turtle nesting season.

The total project cost is estimated at \$20 million, with the federal share at \$12 million. Tybee has secured our local share of \$8 million.

Our understanding is that winning bids for beach nourishment projects in New Jersey came in significantly below government estimates, producing at least \$30 million in savings. This is great news. We are requesting just a portion of those savings be directed to Tybee's project. Doing so will continue our federal partnership that began 50 years ago out of recognition that an estimated 78 percent of our beach erosion is due to ongoing federal dredging of the Savannah River Shipping Channel, which disrupts the natural transfer of sand from barrier islands to the north.

Tybee Island has lost 65 percent of our sand since the last USACE nourishment in 2020. This impacts us in three ways:

**403 Butler Avenue | P.O. Box 2749
Tybee Island, Georgia 31328-2749**



**(912) 786-4573 tel
www.cityoftybee.org**

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1. **Storm Protection.** The beach and dune system are our primary defense against tropical storms that regularly hit the Southeast. Major dune scarping is edging closer to homes and businesses. Skipping our planned project this winter means we must wait through, at a minimum, two hurricane seasons until our next nourishment. Analysis shows that structures will begin flooding from moderate storm impacts in 2027 if nothing is done.
2. **Economic Impact.** Tybee is Georgia's most publicly accessible beach and is an affordable family vacation destination for nearly 1 million visitors each year. The beach is the engine of an industry with a \$182 million annual local economic impact, directly supporting 1,170 local jobs. The current eroded condition of our beach is having a negative impact on visitation this year, as word is getting out that sections of our beach are no longer accessible from mid to high tide.
3. **Critical Habitat.** Endangered sea turtles have created 36 nests on our beach so far this season, which has broken all records. Tragically, eggs in more than half of those nests have had to be relocated because they were laid in eroded sections of the beach that would become covered at high tide. Relocated nests have a much lower hatching success rate.

For the above reasons, the federal government's \$12 million allocation would receive a tremendous return on investment. Delaying would make the beach nourishment project more expensive, and increase costs on the back end as all levels of government respond to the impacts of storm damage and economic hardship caused by a massively eroded beach.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian West, Mayor
City of Tybee Island
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