



City of Galveston

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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February 16, 2023

Dear Mr. Hardy,

As Mayor of the City of Galveston I am writing to express support for the Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research SHORE facility in Galveston, Texas.

Currently, Texas is lacking the research infrastructure for sea turtle research and conservation that is well established in other parts of the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research's mission is to address the data gaps and research needs to conserve sea turtles in Texas, and throughout the Gulf of Mexico, while at the same time offering an educational and outreach center to the community to understand the importance of sea turtles.

This facility will benefit the Galveston-Houston metroplex, and beyond, by providing new and engaging opportunities for tourists and locals to see sea turtles, learn about their biology and conservation, as well as important maritime and marine conservation issues. Visitors will learn more about Galveston Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, our place within these ecosystems, and how to build a resilient coastal community.

Funding this new facility will support its operation and training of undergraduates, graduates, veterinary students, scientists and volunteers in many STEM fields. The facility will strengthen the Texas workforce of our coastal community in all aspects of sea turtle biology, marine ecology & conservation of the western Gulf of Mexico. The facility and programs of the Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research (GCSTR) will provide exceptional experiences and community engagement that will bring attention to the Texas A&M University at Galveston campus and result in the recruitment and retention of students.

The center will highlight the research by TAMUG faculty as it related to marine conservation, and the societal uses of our marine systems as part of the "Blue Economy" Once built, the facility is expected to host 150,000 visitors annually, and will rehabilitate, rescue, or respond to 500 sea turtles/year. This will be a rich educational environment that will educate the public on sea turtle conservation, but also the role of maritime industry, fisheries, and restoration in Galveston Bay.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter and for being a driver in the blue economy.

Sincerely,

Craig Brown, Mayor

