



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE  
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

January 15, 2019

Honorable James Yarbrough  
City of Galveston  
P.O. Box 779  
Galveston, TX 77553-0779

RE: Coastal Texas Study

Dear Mayor Yarbrough:

Thank you for your letter and interest in the Coastal Texas Study. You are clearly aware of the need to do something to reduce the risk to the Houston/Galveston area. I appreciate your leadership and advocacy for the citizens of Galveston. The five-and-a-half-year study is a little over halfway through and is scheduled for completion in 2021. The study so far has evaluated general locations for a possible barrier and is currently in the public comment period on the analysis that has been completed so far.

I have heard and share many concerns of the people of Texas regarding the current draft proposal. While I strongly support moving forward with a coastal barrier and protection plan, we must take the communities' concerns into account. On December 20th, 2018, I presented a statement of principles that I would like to see incorporated into the plan. It is my hope that we can take the communities' concerns into account and build a consensus on a plan to protect the coast. My six guiding principles are attached to this letter.

Providing alternatives for the ring levee is one of these principles. In the next phase of the study the details of the location and height of the barrier will be developed. The alignment that is in the report now was for comparison of general locations and will likely change. The study team is working to minimize the amount of impact by keeping the proposed structure as small as possible.

After conducting a series of public meetings and listening sessions, there is much more to be considered. I have fought to have the public comment period extended, and despite the government shutdown, Colonel Zetterstrom and the United States Army Corps of Engineers have agreed to extend the public comment period to February 8, 2019.

Please continue to encourage your constituents to submit written comments to [CoastalTexas@usace.army.mil](mailto:CoastalTexas@usace.army.mil). It is important we hear from the public on possible alignments on Bolivar and Galveston. Comments must be officially submitted to become part of the administrative record.

I'm sorry I missed you at the Roundtable, but I sincerely appreciate your representation of Galveston and the cities interests. The GLO will continue to provide additional information and answer questions as received. For further details on the Coastal Texas Study, please feel free to contact Tony Williams at [tony.williams@glo.texas.gov](mailto:tony.williams@glo.texas.gov) or by phone at 512-463-5055. The GLO remains committed to ensuring the public's voice is heard.

Sincerely,



GEORGE P. BUSH

Commissioner, Texas General Land Office



# Coastal Texas Study Guiding Principles

Commissioner George P. Bush,  
Texas General Land Office

**As the non-federal sponsor it is the job of the Texas General Land Office to represent the people of Texas and more specifically the coast. In this role, Commissioner Bush has defined the following principles on which his support for this draft proposal rests:**

*We must do something to protect the coast. During the public comment period many have expressed a desire that we do nothing. In the wake of Hurricanes Ike and Harvey, the answer is not to do nothing. Our beaches are eroding at such a rate that we may lose them forever. This is simply not acceptable. The Coastal Texas Study can help us devise a plan to re-nourish our beaches, not just now, but into the future. Commissioner Bush believes we can strike a balance between protecting lives, jobs, environment and maintaining the lifestyle that makes Bolivar and Galveston so unique.*

1. Locate the levee system on or along the beach. A sand dune-based system which would fit with the natural ecology would be preferable. We must include nourished beaches to protect the dune levee and provide much needed sand to our already eroding beaches. I will not support any such sand levee unless adequate access to the beach is included. Consideration for property rights must be taken into account.

*The impact to the surrounding community must be minimized. Additional studies are needed before any path is determined. These studies should be made public as soon as completed and presented to the community for review.*

2. The proposed gate at Bolivar Roads must not do any long-term damage to the ecology or the environment of the Gulf.

*This gate is controversial, which is understandable. However, the location and design is not final. I will not support this proposal unless the Corps and the General Land Office work closely with environmental groups to get it right. Plans to do exactly that are under way, but this is the largest such proposed project the Corps has ever done. It has to be done right; this is the best and only chance we have to make coastal protection a reality.*

3. Provide alternatives to the ring levee in Galveston.

*This idea came about in response to the idea of closing San Luis Pass. In the next phase of the study the details of the location and height of a barrier will be developed.*

4. The draft proposal must be republished with all the necessary disclaimers that has "draft document" printed on every page.

*This will clearly convey to landowners and businesses that the draft proposal is meant for planning purposes only and isn't final.*

5. Finally, after this public comment period is complete we must hold another round of public meetings to review how the Corps has digested the feedback to date.

*I appreciate all of those that have attended the meetings and provided feedback. I will continue to work to ensure that public comments are carefully considered and included as we move forward with this draft proposal.*

6. The Army Corps should publicize the public comments, making this process more transparent for our community.