

Jekyll Island

April 2, 2008

The Honorable Jerry Keen
338 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Honorable Majority Leader Jerry Keen:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your inquiry regarding the Jekyll Island Authority's (JIA) plans for the utilization of the large, impervious asphalt parking lot to the north of the present site of the aging Convention Center (see attached pictorial illustration).

It is important to understand that the Coastal Resources Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has recently established the jurisdictional line under the Georgia Shoreline Protection Act along this stretch of beach. Accordingly, they have determined that this parking lot will be under the jurisdiction of the Shore Protection Act and permits will be required for any redevelopment of this area. We have also been advised that based on past practices the Shore Assistance Committee would favorably receive any permit request by JIA to develop this unattractive area into a public park, improved public access and beach parking, and an Environmental Conservation Center. The request would also include a plan to reestablish native growth and improve the dune structure in this area.

After conferring with our revitalization partner, Linger Longer Communities, we have made the decision to limit use of this area to those public purposes and not development of accommodations, such as hotels or condominiums. Therefore, the Buckner amendment that was added to Senate Bill 367 is unnecessary. In fact, it is overly restrictive in that it would prohibit JIA's plans by only allowing the addition of picnic tables, bathhouses and restrooms. The Buckner amendment would prohibit any "additional project, development or other improvement," including landscaping, improved beach access, and the Environmental Conservation Center.

Any revised conceptual plans or agreements we enter into with Linger Longer Communities will reflect this commitment by the JIA. Be assured that the JIA Board and our private partner are committed to the responsible redevelopment of Jekyll Island to serve all the people of Georgia. Through this revitalization effort, the Authority will be able to better maintain and expand public access and the enjoyment of Jekyll Island's Beaches.

Sincerely,



Ben Porter
Chairman, Jekyll Island Authority