



March 15, 2009

Congressman Henry Brown
103 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Brown:

We are writing to request your continued support for federal funding for the expansion of the Myrtle Beach Convention Center. This facility serves a crucial role in our tourism industry, the number one industry in South Carolina. Its future expansion will enable our tourism industry to grow and prosper.

The Myrtle Beach Convention Center hosted over 500 groups in 2008 and has an economic impact in excess of \$55 million annually. The center is now operating at near capacity level. Expansion of the convention center will enable the destination to attract more events and larger events, and most of these additional events will be outside the peak season. This will enable the local economy to boost its shoulder seasons and become more of a year-round economy.

The center also serves as the command center for the City of Myrtle Beach during emergency operations, including pre- and post-hurricane operations. The center plays host to a variety of civic events and public events, and was the host site for the 2008 South Carolina GOP Presidential Candidates Debate.

The State of South Carolina made an initial investment in the convention center during Phase I of construction and has recently made an investment to help secure the land needed for expansion. The City of Myrtle Beach has made a substantial investment in the center, both during Phase I construction and also through the addition of an on-site hotel (currently operated by the Sheraton Corporation). Federal investment is warranted and will complement the funds invested by local and state government.

The Myrtle Beach area is a fast-growing community that is highly dependent upon tourism. The expansion of the Myrtle Beach Convention Center will create hundreds of jobs and fuel future growth of our local tourism industry. We thank you for your past support and ask for your assistance in securing an investment of federal funding into this most important project.

With warmest regards, we are,

Sincerely,

Brant Branham
Chairman

Brad Dean
President