



March 24, 2010

To The Honorable Mayor and Commissioners of the City of Key West:

I am in writing in support of the City of Key West establishing a dedicated European-style clothing-optional naturist family beach. The reason we support an additional facility of this type in South Florida is that it would have a synergistic effect on visitations from the market segment that seeks out these style of amenities. We have learned that travelers that come from long distances, such as Europe, are more likely to visit South Florida if there are a variety of places that meet their recreational preferences.

The City of Sunny Isles Beach is contiguous to Haulover Beach Park's now world famous, designated clothing-optional beach, a Miami-Dade County Regional Park, which abuts our ocean side city line and is used by our city residents. This closeness made us sensitive to the possibility of beach user conflicts as well as knowledgeable of the benefits that can be attained from such a tourist attraction.

Based on our experience with Haulover Beach visitors, B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation and its adjunct organization South Florida Free Beaches -- the two groups that mentor the beach -- our community has witnessed nothing but a positive economic impact and no user conflicts.

Our original concerns regarding behavior, crowd control and other issues a facility of this nature conjures, never materialized because of the fine cooperation between Miami-Dade Parks Department, the mentoring organizations' programs and the visitors themselves, to Haulover Beach.

Since the clothing-optional beach has existed, our community, which has a large tourist based economy and is a vacation destination, has been enjoying all the benefits that a million additional beach visitors each year have brought to an area. As a business and tourist-related industry association, we keep a pulse on all the components of the community. Weekly, we answer questions from concerns for safety to facilities available. We also respond to numerous inquiries for a clothing-optional beach and lodging arrangements.

Haulover Beach's naturist visitors have been responsible for increases in sales and resort taxes for the City of Sunny Isles Beach because of the increased business seen in our hotels, restaurants and shops. These increases have also resulted in increased employment for the hospitality industry catering to these tourists.

In essence, the decision by the community of Sunny Isles Beach and Miami-Dade County to continue the support for the designated clothing-optional beach at Haulover Beach is based on all the positive experiences these past years as well as the continued reliability of B.E.A.C.H.E.S Foundation and South Florida Free Beaches in their mentoring programs for this facility. These organizations know the international naturist market, how to reach them and have a stellar reputation. They have a proven track record for knowing how to manage and mentor a naturist beach to achieve the best results.

It is my recommendation that Key West move forward in its efforts to designate a naturist beach and work closely with the expert beach organizations. This added facility will see both communities in South Florida benefit from the increase in tourism, as tour operators and individual tourists take advantage of the both beaches in a single vacation market.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ibis Romero". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered on the page.

Ibis Romero, CTC

Executive Director

Sunny Isles Beach Tourism and Marketing Council