



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wilmington Chamber Board Passes Resolutions Supporting Environmental Matters of Local Importance

Wilmington, N.C. —The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce board of directors passed two resolutions today to express support for the City of Wilmington 2016 Parks Bond and for the creation of a sustainable, state funding mechanism for beaches and coastal storm damage reduction projects.

The City of Wilmington 2016 Parks Bond will be on the November 8 ballot for consideration by voters. Recent surveys and focus groups held during comprehensive planning discussions have indicated strong support for improvements to and the expansion of parks facilities.

Within the City, the identified list of needed new park facilities and improvements to existing facilities totals \$60 million. The 2016 Parks Bond will provide \$38 million (\$7.6 million of which will be derived from existing funds; 30.4 million from bond funds) to complete projects ranging from development of the North Waterfront Park and new soccer fields to extensive renovations at Olsen Park and the MLK Center.

“Quality park, athletic and recreational facilities are sought-after amenities from the standpoint of Wilmington families and businesses looking to locate to the area,” said Wilmington Chamber Chairman Mitch Lamm. “The Chamber has been particularly interested in a signature waterfront park for Wilmington, such as those enjoyed by other coastal communities like Charleston and Savannah. The phenomenal design for the North Waterfront Park developed by the City, which will be funded by this bond, will attract thousands each year to our downtown, helping support businesses and generate more revenues through tourism.”

Support for a new sustainable funding mechanism for beach renourishment projects has become an immediate need because federal funding mechanisms for shoreline projects are becoming more difficult or are ending. Beaches and inlets generate \$4.8 billion in revenues and directly support 62,000 jobs in North Carolina’s coastal communities. Without effective planning and management, the future of the state’s coastal communities—including New Hanover, Brunswick and Pender Counties—and a significant part of the state’s economic base could be adversely affected.

“The importance of North Carolina’s beaches cannot be understated, and this is an issue that hits especially close to home for our region,” said Chairman Lamm. “It also can’t be stressed enough that this is an issue for the entire state. Our beaches are a state

resource that generates billions in revenue and provides a quality of life amenity used by millions of people, whether they live close to the shoreline or visit on vacations. As a state, we must develop a cost-effective and equitable approach to beach management and restoration so that all of North Carolina's citizens don't lose this valuable commodity."

A copy of the two resolutions passed by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce board of directors are attached.

About the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce is the largest membership-based business association in Southeastern North Carolina. The Chamber's mission is to ensure economic prosperity throughout our region. This is accomplished by: creating a diverse, inclusive organization that serves as a strong voice for businesses in the Greater Wilmington area; offering unique membership benefits, services and education; and challenging government officials to address long term community and business interests.

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