

*Dear Sarasota County Commissioner {Name},*

*Please say NO to Midnight Pass and many voters and taxpayers like me will support you. We understand that dozens of smart, well-meaning elected officials and staff members tried for 24 years to open Midnight Pass. You invested over \$1 million in studies, expert testimony, engineering plans, and legal expenses. You lobbied State and Federal officials.*

*Now, on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this effort, you can make a decision to celebrate what nature has accomplished while we were all trying to re-open Midnight Pass. Little Sarasota Bay has healed. There was a devastating shift from a marine system to an estuarine system when Midnight Pass closed. It was heartbreaking and we tried our hardest to fix it.*

*Today, the National Marine Fisheries Service says Little Sarasota Bay, which has become a marvelous estuary, is a "nationally important aquatic resource." The state has designated Little Sarasota Bay part of its Outstanding Florida Waters program. There are manatees, fish, turtles, wading birds, healthy seagrass, and a pristine beach for all to enjoy. Federal and State agencies must abide by Endangered and Threatened Species Act regarding manatees and sea turtles and there will probably never be a permit granted. County and FEMA ordinances prohibit mangrove and sea grass dredging. Even if a permit is granted, there will be numerous lawsuits filed by homeowners, environmental groups and government agencies.*

*Our economy is struggling and it is just irresponsible to spend money on anything nonessential at this time. Respecting the environment that has flourished since the closing of Midnight Pass, is the right thing to do. Common sense says it is time to stop expending resources to fix a problem by creating a worse problem. Please, leave Midnight Pass alone.*

*Sincerely,*

*{Your name and address}*