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February 8, 2012

The Honorable Jack Tarr
Mayor Town of Chincoteague
6150 Community Drive
Chincoteague, VA 23336

Dear Mayor Tarr:

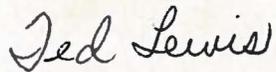
I am writing to let you know the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce is concerned about the negative effects of the recent announcement of a grant award made by the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks program in the amount of 1.5 million dollars and issues related to the CCP.

As you know the Chincoteague Chamber works diligently to promote tourism to the Island. In 2011 our chamber website had over 115,500 hits. We answered over 10,000 phone calls and assisted 13,000 visitors in the chamber office. In addition to these numbers, we distributed 110,000 visitor's guides, answered over 1500 emails, hosted travel writers and journalists and staged the Oyster Festival, Seafood Festival, Easter Decoy Show and Christmas Parade to bring people to the Island.

The Oyster Festival is held on Saturday of Columbus Day week end at Maddox Family Campground. This year is the 40th Anniversary and a celebrated tradition families have enjoyed for many years because the event is held during the 3-day weekend. The total revenue for the Chamber is in excess of \$100,000 for the one day event. The 2700 attendees come from Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia filling the motels, campgrounds, B & B's, restaurants and shops for the holiday weekend. The loss of the event by federal purchase of the campground would be a hardship on our Chamber. Lodging and food businesses comprise about two-thirds of the tourist-related business in Chincoteague. Tourism not only generates revenue for these sectors, but also generates revenue for the town in the form of food and lodging excise taxes. The loss of the revenues for this weekend alone would be serious.

We are getting numerous phone calls and written concerns regarding the future of Chincoteague. The Oyster Festival, which is now in jeopardy, is a proven economic boost for our local businesses. Property values are in question and real estate sales have been lost because of the uncertainty of the future. The CCP alternatives presented last summer have proposed a beach relocation and reduced parking with a transit shuttle. We are hearing visitors say they are making vacation plans to visit other areas because of the possibility of drastic changes at Assateague Beach and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. If we do not resolve this problem, it will be devastating to our economy!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ted Lewis".

Ted Lewis

President