



January 30, 2017

Mr. Douglas Evans
Groundwork USA Program Manager, National Park Service, Rivers & Trails Program
15 State Street
Boston, MA 02109

RE: Letter of Support for Groundwork Mobile

Dear Mr. Evans:

On behalf of the members and Board of Directors of *Partners for Environmental Progress* (PEP), we support the opportunity to establish a Groundwork Trust in Mobile, Alabama. Mayor Sandy Stimpson set an audacious goal when he came to office in 2014: to transform Mobile into the safest and most business and family friendly city in America by 2020. Since then the City has created a number of initiatives to revitalize neighborhoods, build miles of trails connecting neighborhoods, parks and jobs, stem the significant litter problem in the City, provide new job opportunities for our youth and much more. Establishing a Groundwork Trust in Mobile to develop diverse partnerships, engage local business, and involve young people to assist in the transformation of abandoned lands into community assets would be a vital component to improving Mobile's triple bottom line, environmentally, economically and equitably.

The City of Mobile has identified and mapped out hundreds of vacant lots around Mobile. These sites are a threat to the public health, safety, and welfare of these neighborhoods. Groundwork Mobile will partner with the City to improve local neighborhoods by empowering the community and transforming these vacant lots. Groundwork Mobile will engage neighborhoods in determining the best use of these vacant properties: community gardens, pocket parks, or as a permanent green space serving as a natural barrier to our rivers and creeks. The impact will be decreased litter and pollution in our waterways, healthy and affordable produce in food desert areas, employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth, and a stronger relationship between citizens and their natural environment.

Groundwork will partner with the wide range of non-profit organizations and agencies that address youth, housing, social justice, and environmental issues and the City and County government. Restoring vacant lots often overgrown and full of trash into a vibrant and vital space will improve the health, safety and economy of our local neighborhoods.

PEP stands ready to assist Groundwork Mobile in this endeavor. We are willing to participate in the planning process and to serve on the Steering Committee. PEP is a local non-profit association of business and education leaders committed to applying science-based best environmental practices to business and community issues. Our 220 plus member companies, who employ 22,000 local citizens, support a sustainable balance between economic growth and development and a thriving and resilient natural environment that enhances the lives of our citizens. PEP represents the diversity of business and industry along the Gulf Coast and includes Evonik, Austal USA, BASF, Thompson Engineering, Clean Harbors, Performance Contractors, Hancock Bank, Infirmary Medical and many more. Our members are dedicated community partners and provide extensive financial and volunteer support to a wide range of programs, including all of those impacted by a Groundwork Mobile.

We choose to support Groundwork Mobile to cultivate a renewed sense of place, improve safety and foster a desirable and livable community. If we can be of any additional assistance regarding the application, please do not hesitate to contact me at (251) 345-7269.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Denson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being particularly prominent.

Jennifer Denson
Executive Director

A Clean Environment is Good for Business

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