

Mahoney Introduces Bill to Protect Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse

(March 18th, 2007)

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Tim Mahoney (FL-16) introduced a bill to designate the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse as an Outstanding Natural Area (ONA). Mahoney's bill is called the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area Act of 2007. Companion legislation was introduced by Senator Nelson in the Senate today.

"The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is a national treasure. The historical, ecological, and cultural significance make the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse an important part of our community. I am proud to sponsor legislation to preserve the lighthouse and the surrounding area for generations to come," said Congressman Tim Mahoney.

Congressman Mahoney's bill would designate the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse and the surrounding 126 acres as an "Outstanding Natural Area" (ONA). ONA is a congressional designation that was established to protect federal lands. The designation has been used for conservation sites of approximately 100 acres in size that include a lighthouse. Jupiter Inlet would be the second ONA in the nation. The first is at Yaquina Head in Oregon.

The ONA designation would:

- Provide long-term protection to a site of cultural and biological resources in a highly urbanized part of Florida.
- Promote tourism.
- Create an eastern/Atlantic counterpart to Yaquina Head on the Oregon coast.
- Elevate the visibility of the local community and help it compete for environmental grants.

The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse has both environmental and historical significance for Florida. The lighthouse is located where the Loxahatchee River and the Indian River Lagoon meet. It is the home to endangered species of plants and animals and other natural communities that are quickly vanishing from south Florida.

The area surrounding the lighthouse was first used by Native Americans over 4,000 years ago. In the 17th Century, Europeans first made contact with the area. Both the lighthouse and the associated Oil House are nationally recognized historical structures.

*Photo from left to right: Congressman Tim Mahoney, Jupiter Mayor Karen Golonka, and Senator Nelson at the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse

