




Office of the Mayor  
A.J. Holloway

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** Sept. 27, 2007

**TO:** Councilmembers George Lawrence, William "Bill" Stallworth, Charles T. Harrison Jr., Mike Fitzpatrick, Tom Wall, Edward "Ed" Gemmill, and David Fayard

**FROM:** Mayor A.J. Holloway 

**RE:** Veto of Tivoli re-zoning

I hereby veto Ordinance 2086, which concerns the proposed re-zoning of a nearly 30-acre beachfront tract of land at the former site of the Tivoli Hotel on U.S 90 in east Biloxi.

The community has witnessed a great deal of discussion concerning this subject, and the council's 4-3 vote illustrates how polarizing this issue has been. I have benefited from the many comments.

Among the reasons for my veto:

- **The beach:** The sand beach has been and should continue to be a defining factor regarding where casinos should be located. So far this approach has served us well, and I believe it continues to be the right path to take.

- **Opening a wide door:** A casino project on the north side of U.S 90 that would be exclusively north of the sand beach would expose this city to enormous pressure from property owners and developers seeking waterfront zoning designations from one end of the front beach to the other. This action would open a door that would be difficult to close.

- **Level playing field:** Expansion of gaming to include areas north of the sand beach would provide an advantage that did not exist for developers who initially invested in this market and re-invested hundreds of millions of dollars post-Katrina. We should maintain a level playing field for all participants.

- **The long-term plan:** Proponents have said this project -- with promises of thousands of jobs, millions of dollars in tax revenue and off-site retail -- would rejuvenate east Biloxi, one of the most storm-ravaged areas of the city. The city has spent millions -- massive water and sewer projects, and construction of new roadways -- to develop the east end of the peninsula as the heart of the city's gaming industry. Allowing casino development along front beach while so much of the east peninsula remains undeveloped would negate years of progress toward that goal. My vision for the city encompasses an economically revitalized east Biloxi to balance the natural attraction we have always enjoyed with the sand beach.

As I've said on numerous occasions before and since Katrina, it is important that we strike a good balance between land zoned for casinos and land zoned for other uses.

It's a difficult decision to veto a proposal that could have seen a billion-dollar-plus investment in our city, but this decision affects the entire city, and I must do what I believe is best for the city as a whole.

I am sending a duplicate original of this veto message to Lucy Brashier, Clerk of the City Council, for inclusion in the minutes.

Attachment: Ordinance No. 2086

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