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Subject: Why I am voting YES for our new Convention Center Hotel

Date: Fri, 04 Mar 2016 20:59:27 +0000

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Dear Fellow Miami Beach Neighbor,

The most important thing I can do as your Mayor is to make sure we evaluate and validate any measures that are proposed to advance the interests of our city, and every resident who lives here. I take that responsibility seriously, because if we don't protect our

neighborhoods and secure our future, no one will.

After two years of meetings and hearings where our city heard from experts here and across the world, we now have an opportunity to make our Convention Center one of the world's best, generate \$25-million a year for vital city improvements, create more than 1,400 jobs, address traffic congestion, and do it all without spending one penny in taxes.

During the upcoming March 15th election, Miami Beach voters will have the opportunity to approve the lease of a parcel of City-owned land so a **100-percent privately funded** hotel can be built as part of a master plan to finish the Convention Center. The hotel will be directly connected to the Convention Center. Independent studies have already confirmed this will encourage more pedestrian activity and reduce traffic by eliminating the need for convention attendees to drive to and from events at the Center each day.

This was a critical component for me because we must move away from consumer/ commuter shows, which bring additional congestion to our city and aggressively transition to world-class conferences which put “heads in beds” as opposed to “cars on roads.” Top convention planners and industry experts all say that the only way Miami Beach will be considered a top destination for “fly-in” conferences is if we have a base hotel attached to our new Convention Center.

Further, the hotel is being built completely with private dollars, and will generate an estimated annual average of \$24.6 million to our community in tax and lease contributions. Those dollars are necessary to help improve our neighborhoods, paying for: flood mitigation, undergrounding of utilities, education enhancements, and transit improvements that could include a new streetcar/trolley system.



The past year has been an exciting one for our community, filled with progress and milestones. We celebrated our City's 100th Anniversary, stepped up our efforts to fight flooding, and long-awaited renovations to our Convention Center are finally underway—a point of civic pride and an economic engine for Miami Beach.

On March 15th, let's continue moving our city in the right direction by voting "Yes" (#60) for a privately funded Convention District Hotel, vital neighborhood improvements for Miami Beach, and more than 1,400 new jobs for area residents. I'll be voting "Yes" and I humbly ask you to join me, along with many leaders in our City, in doing so as well.

Let's finish the job!

Sincerely,

Philip Levine
Mayor, City of Miami Beach

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