

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) has enlisted the support of 14 other Florida congressmen in an effort to change the location of a proposed gas pipeline off the coastline of Anna Maria Island.

At a meeting in the U.S. Capitol today of the Florida congressional delegation, Buchanan made the case that the pipeline would jeopardize beach renourishment programs in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. He asked Florida's other members to sign a letter to federal transportation officials calling for the project to be rejected.

"Our white sandy beaches attract tourists and improve our quality of life," said Buchanan. "These beaches are eroding and require maintenance. The proposed pipeline would deny access to the best sand source for beach renourishment and jeopardize the region's economy. I am hopeful that we can agree upon an alternative route that does not put our local beaches in jeopardy."

In a letter to U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, the congressmen urged the Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to reject the location proposed for a new pipeline from the proposed Port Dolphin liquefied natural gas (LNG) Deepwater Port to the mainland. They urge MARAD and the USCG to consider other viable alternatives to the proposed route.

Earlier this week, Buchanan offered to work with Port Dolphin Energy and local officials toward an agreeable, alternative solution. Manatee, Sarasota and Pinellas Counties, the Town of Longboat Key and the cities of Anna Maria, Bradenton Beach and Holmes Beach oppose the proposed route for the pipeline.

The following members signed onto Buchanan's letter to Peters: U.S. Reps. Gus Bilirakis (FL-9), Ginny Brown-Waite (FL-5), Kathy Castor (FL-11), Ander Crenshaw (FL-4), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (FL-21), Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25), Alcee Hastings (FL-23), Connie Mack (FL-14), Jeff Miller (FL-1), Adam Putnam (FL-12), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18), Cliff Stensens (FL-6), Dave Weldon (FL-15), and Bill Young (FL-10).