



For immediate release
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St. Petersburg Charter Amendment– November 2018 To Allow a Ten Year Lease for Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center

Tierra Verde, FL – Tampa Bay Watch urges you to vote **YES** for the **City of St. Petersburg Charter Amendment on November 2018 Election** that will allow a 10 year lease agreement with St. Petersburg to lease, operate, and manage the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center currently under construction on the St. Pete Pier. The Discovery Center will offer dynamic interactive exhibits that will educate the public and showcase the Tampa Bay estuary, as well as classroom space for school field trips and summer camp programs.

Tampa Bay Watch will invest approximately \$2 million in the Discovery Center. In order to justify this investment and better amortize the costs, Tampa Bay Watch has asked the City to increase the lease term to 10 years. In addition to allowing Tampa Bay Watch to better amortize its investment, the lease extension will bring our lease term in line with the other leases the City has approved for the Pier. Extension of Tampa Bay Watch's lease to 10 years will require voter approval via a charter amendment on the November 2018 ballot.

The City Council on August 2, 2018 unanimously approved placing the lease extension charter amendment on the November 2018 ballot. The lease extension is only for the overwater portion of the Pier where the building for the Discovery Center will be located. Note that there are three other buildings within the St. Pete Pier that have 10-year leases. These are the St. Petersburg History Museum, Doc Fords Restaurant, and Teak Restaurant. Unlike those buildings, the Discovery Center is located on a section of the new Pier that previously never had a building. As a result the lease automatically defaulted to a 5-year term, and requires voter approval to change it.

The language that will appear on the November 2018 ballot as a Charter Amendment is as follows:

“The City Charter currently provides a ten-year lease limitation for the “Pier Building” on the City Park and Waterfront Map. Shall the Charter be amended to apply that ten-year lease limitation to the entire overwater structure east of the Pier Parking Area and Spa Beach parcels on that map, including the overwater portion of the St. Pete Pier? This amendment would not affect existing protections for any parcel of land, including Spa Beach.”

YES or NO

The charter amendment pertains solely to the overwater portion of the new St. Pete Pier where the Discovery Center structure will be located. It does not include nor does it impact in any way the uplands area of the St. Pete Pier district, including Spa Beach.

Voting “YES” on the charter amendment will provide Tampa Bay Watch a lease term that is consistent with the other approved leases for the new St. Pete Pier. It will also enable Tampa Bay Watch to continue to raise funds to prudently invest in the Discovery Center and further its mission for the advancement of educational programs to a broader segment of St. Petersburg and its visitors.

Please vote YES during the November 2018 election.

Tampa Bay Watch is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) stewardship program dedicated exclusively to the charitable and scientific purpose of protecting and restoring the marine and wetland environments of the Tampa Bay estuary encompassing over 400 square miles of open water and 2,300 square miles of highly- developed watershed. Tampa Bay Watch involves more than 10,000 youth and adult volunteers each year in hands on habitat restoration projects. For more information on upcoming events, or to become a volunteer or member, visit www.tampabaywatch.org, or call 727-867-8166.

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