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CITY OF TYBEE ISLAND

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Georgia Mayor's YouTube Lobbying Pitch

*The following information is excerpted from an article in **The Hill**, June 21, 2007, by Jim Snyder – © 2007 Capitol Hill Publishing Corp. For reprint permission, please contact **David Wallis**, (212) 924-2283, or visit <http://www.featurewell.com/>.*

Tybee Island, Ga. – (June 26, 2007) One small-town mayor from Georgia has used YouTube in a new way: to make a lobbying pitch. Jason Buelterman, who coordinates an Advanced Placement program for high school students when he isn't serving as part-time mayor of Tybee Island, taped a 10-minute video shot mostly from the beach to provide visual evidence that the town needs more sand.

Like a lot of municipalities across the country, Tybee, located 13 miles east of Savannah, Ga., was left in the lurch last appropriations season when Democratic lawmakers, themselves left with a slew of spending bills Republicans punted last year, eschewed earmarks in favor of expediency and passed a giant omnibus that left 2006 funding levels intact. Tybee is back this year asking to replenish a two and a half-mile stretch of beach. At times sharing screen time and a small stretch of sand with other, more scantily clad, beachgoers, Buelterman, dressed in dark slacks, a blue button-down shirt and shades, lays out the reasons why Congress should appropriate the money to restore the beach. The beach is a diminishing resource, Buelterman said, in part because of a manmade shipping channel that traps sand that would otherwise flow southward to replenish Tybee Island naturally.

The video proves the point. In one shot he is standing on a pile of rocks that act as a dike. The camera pans right to show a two-story condo just feet away from the ocean. Another shot shows the proximity of the tide to the main evacuation road for a major storm. Buelterman sent the tape to his congressman, Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Ga.), who is something of a YouTuber himself. Kingston has a dozen or so podcasts visitors can download from his congressional webpage. Buelterman said part of the motivation for posting the video was the realization that competition for federal money is growing more intense as earmarks come under greater scrutiny.

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