



Letter of Support for the Stewardship of Jimmy Buffett's Key West Studio

Gary Moreira, Senior Property Manager

City of Key West

1300 White Street, Key West FL 33040

December 15, 2025

Mr. Moreira and the Honorable Members of the City of Key West,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued stewardship of Jimmy Buffett's Key West studio in a manner that honors both his legacy and the cultural fabric of this community. I am a big fan of Jimmy Buffett, and a big lover of Key West. I consider them synonymous. I live right across the street from his beloved studio. I am at 210-214 Elizabeth St, less than 50 paces from his studio.

Jim Mayer, a long-standing member of Jimmy Buffet's Band, the Coral Reefers, and I, stopped by the studio in April. At the time I was considering purchasing it. We were surprised to find out that a quick sale of the studio equipment looked likely. Our intent was to keep it intact, with his legacy, and allow up-and-coming artists in Key West, and elsewhere, to record in this historic studio at no charge. Jimmy did this for so many over the past forty years. Jim Mayer did some research and was told at the time that we could make a bid to buy the equipment and set up a studio somewhere else as the building was to be demolished. Our purpose was to preserve Jimmy's studio and legacy while doing what he loved most, helping other artists. It was not to make money off his equipment.

I was able to get a statement from Jim Mayer; "What Jimmy Buffett and his band created at the Key West studio shrimp boat sound goes beyond Key West politics and commerce. It is as much a part of music history as the country musical Hall of Fame, the Johnny Cash Museum, or any other musical foundations that have shaped how we look at music. You need only take a brief look at the current music scene to see, Zac Brown, Kenny Chesney, and countless others who have followed in Jimmy Buffet's wake. Most of the beautiful island music that he created was made at shrimp boat sound in Key West. How can we relocate that to demolishing it for a bar or restaurant? That logic is beyond me. Because the history of Jimmy Buffett is in all of us as much as the beach, the sun, and the sky. Even from a practical perspective, Jimmy Buffett has brought countless dollars of tourism to Key West

and the tropics. Used properly, his studio will continue to bring countless dollars to Key West. Can we disrespect all that Jimmy has brought to the keys since he first arrived with Jerry Jeff Walker, and bulldoze it for some new construction and a new business venture? Let's take the long view on what has been and what we've built, what Jimmy built and what we want to preserve for future generations. It's more than a buck. It's the joy of storytelling. Let's keep the (Key West) party going. There's plenty of bars in Key West and there will be plenty more, but there's only one shrimp boat sound and while we still have it, let's preserve it."

This city is full of shrines to great people, Ernest Hemmingway, Mel Fisher, Judy Blume, Harry Truman, Tennessee Williams, Kelly McGillis, Henry Flagler, and many others. None of these figures are globally connected and known more than Jimmy Buffett. Where will his shrine be?

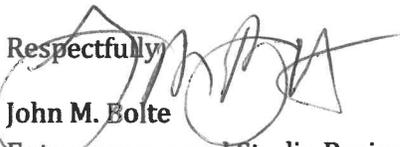
The vision for this studio is not commercial exploitation, but preservation and continuation. The intent is to maintain the studio as a living creative space—one that reflects the generosity, authenticity, and artistic spirit that Jimmy embodied throughout his life. Central to this vision is offering free recording access and developmental support to young and emerging artists, providing them with an opportunity to create in the very space that helped define a uniquely American musical voice.

Equally important is the desire to keep those closest to Jimmy involved, as they wish and are able. This includes longtime collaborators and friends such as members of the Coral Reefer Band, as well as other trusted members of Jimmy's creative circle and family. Their continued presence—formal or informal—would help ensure that the studio remains grounded in the values, tone, and soul that made it special in the first place.

This proposal is about stewardship, not ownership in the traditional sense. It is about safeguarding a cultural landmark, nurturing future artists, and keeping alive the spirit of mentorship, openness, and community that Jimmy Buffett represented so fully in Key West and beyond. If the city needs to make money on his studio, we can find ways to do that with tours and merchandise. Let's work together. I do not intend on making money off his name or the studio. All proceeds can go to the city.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to protecting the cultural heritage of Key West.

Respectfully


John M. Bolte

Entrepreneur and Studio Project Leader

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