AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA BEACHFRONT MANAGEMENT ACT TO DECLARE BEACH VITEX (VITEX ROTUNDIFOLIA) A HIGHLY INVASIVE PLANT AND THEREFORE A PUBLIC NUISANCE.

WHEREAS, the beach strand of Georgetown County represents one of its most valuable natural resources, providing areas for public recreation, attraction of tourists and other visitors, and providing a major boost to the area economy; and

WHEREAS, there are three known species on the Federal Threatened List (loggerhead sea turtles, piping plovers, and seabeach amaranth) which would be severely threatened by Vitex rotundifolia (hereinafter Beach Vitex); and

WHEREAS, there are other species including, but not limited to Sea Oats, Bitter Panicum, Seashore Elder, and American Beachgrass that are severely threatened by the invasive growth of the vitex plant; and

WHEREAS, Beach Vitex destroys the native plant community which protects our dunes; and

WHEREAS, Beach Vitex, a plant species that is not native to this country much less Georgetown County, has been found growing in many places within the County, including the land side of beach dunes; and

WHEREAS, the spreading and persistence of Beach Vitex has caused harm and will continue to cause harm to native species;

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS OF GEORGETOWN COUNTY, IN COUNTY COUNCIL ASSEMBLED:

ARTICLE 5.5 – 54

a. It shall be unlawful to introduce or plant Beach Vitex (vitex rotundifolia) in Georgetown County; and

b. The owner of any property containing Beach Vitex is encouraged to take all appropriate action to eradicate the plant. Under no circumstances shall they allow it to spread to adjacent properties or seaward of the crest of the frontal dune. Vitex
existing on the seaward slope of the frontal dune should be removed by the property owner; and

c. Eradication shall be in accordance with best agricultural practices as recommended by Clemson University or other comparable agency. The County will maintain information in this regard and provide assistance where possible. The County will cooperate with private land owners in this task, but reserves the right to proceed with eradicating Vitex seaward of the crest of the frontal dune even if the land owner objects.

ADOPTION OF THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE moved by ________________________, seconded by ________________________, and after discussion upon call to vote thereon, the vote was as follows:

Those in favor:

Those opposed:

DONE, RATIFIED AND ADOPTED THIS _____DAY OF _____________, 2006.

____________________________________ (Seal)
Sel Hemingway
Chairman, Georgetown County Council

ATTEST:

____________________________
Theresa Floyd
Clerk to Council

This Ordinance, No. ____________ has been reviewed by me and is hereby approved as to form and legality.

____________________________________
John M. Tolar
Georgetown County Attorney

First Reading: ________________________
Second Reading:______________________________
Third Reading:______________________________