

**BEACH NEWS SERVICE**  
American Shore & Beach Preservation Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 24, 2009

**Contacts**

Tina Haisman, ASBPA media relations - (239) 292-2882 or [media@asbpa.org](mailto:media@asbpa.org)

Daniel Sheehan, ASBPA governmental affairs - (202) 775-1796 or [Daniel.Sheehan@marloweco.com](mailto:Daniel.Sheehan@marloweco.com)

**Can you count on Congress to protect your beach in 2009?**

FORT MYERS, FL - Chances are, beaches in the United States might see more help from Washington in the next four years, due in part to the leadership of President Barack Obama and the new 111th Congress with its expanded Democratic majority.

The excitement started in the environmental community soon after the election as President Obama announced his "dream green team:"

- Secretary of Energy - Steven Chu, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist and head of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
- Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Lisa Jackson, a state environmental official from New Jersey.
- White House Energy Czar - Carol Browner, former head of the EPA in the Clinton administration.
- Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality - Nancy Sutley, Los Angeles Deputy Mayor.

President Obama has charged the team with addressing climate change, which is a good thing for beaches, according to ASBPA Governmental Affairs Consultant Daniel Sheehan. "We hope that part of addressing climate change will be the designing of a comprehensive coastal policy," he said.

Sheehan points out there has not been a Cabinet-level position in the past charged with the responsibility for forging a coherent coastal policy. "America has 84,000 miles of shoreline that has historically been managed on an individual, patchwork basis," he explained. "Now that we have new leadership in the White House and a more willing partner with Congress, we have the opportunity to bring a more streamlined and efficient management to our nation's beaches."

Among the first orders of business for the new president and Congress will be passage and enactment of the \$825 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1). This so-called "stimulus package" will include \$4.5 billion for the United States Army Corps of Engineers to fund environmental restoration, flood protection, hydropower and navigation infrastructure projects critical to the economy, including beaches. "We had hoped for more than that, and will look to the Senate to increase that investment. The Corps has \$61 billion construction backlog, so we want to see it get sufficient resources to do a lot of good for America's shorelines," Sheehan said.

Another item on the agenda for Congress is passage of the 2009 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). This act is important to ensure vital water resource projects are executed in a timely fashion. WRDA authorizes Corps projects, and a lack of authorization delays the Corps from moving ahead with important projects on America's favorite beaches. "While we'd like to see Congress get back to the practice of considering WRDA legislation every two years we've been told that, because of the small number of signed Chief's Reports, the next WRDA may slip to 2010," Sheehan says. "Compounding matters is the fact that lawmakers face several other difficult reauthorization bills in 2009, including those concerning surface transportation and aviation. Congress has a long to-do list this year."

"I think 2009 will be good to America's beaches," Sheehan said. "However, as Congress grapples with difficult issues in the weeks and months ahead, we will need to be diligent in all our efforts to advocate for the coast. Much depends on that.

###

ABOUT ASBPA: Founded in 1926, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) represents the scientific, technical and political interests along the coast in an effort to shape national research and policy concerning shore and beach management and restoration. ASBPA strives to engage in a factual debate on coastal issues and economics that will foster sound, far-sighted and economical development and preservation of our beaches; thereby aiding in placing their beliefs within the reach of the largest possible number of people in accordance with the ideals of a democratic nation. For additional information about ASBPA, please visit [www.asbpa.org](http://www.asbpa.org).

This information is provided by the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association. For information, to change your e-mail address or to unsubscribe from this list, contact us at [exdir@asbpa.org](mailto:exdir@asbpa.org)