

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 28, 2008

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Want to be president? Here's what you need to do to protect America's coastlines

FORT MYERS, FL – To offer a perspective on the upcoming presidential election, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association would like to share this open letter to the presidential candidates.

Dear Mr. McCain and Mr. Obama:

If you are elected to the office of President of the United States of America in November, you will be entrusted with one of America's most treasured and endangered natural resources – our coastlines.

The coastlines are treasured, because Americans love them; and they are endangered, because many of them are threatened by erosion and sea level rise.

If there is one thing most Americans can agree on, it is the value of our coast. U.S. citizens believe our coastal areas are worthy of protection and investment. Social economists have documented this value based upon the actions of Americans over time.

Americans have an inherent desire to be near the coast, and they are willing to pay for it. That is clear by several factors, including the investment of time in getting to the coast – research shows people will spend two to four hours getting to the beach for a day trip, plus the cost of fuel. Then, once they arrive, they are willing to spend more for food than they would back home.

Furthermore, people try to move near the coast whenever possible, and retirees seek coastal areas for their retirement. Currently, more than 50 percent of the U.S. population lives within 50 miles of a coast.

The fact is, beaches don't just appeal to *some* Americans, they appeal to *all* Americans.

Gentlemen, there are many tremendous examples of how important the coast is to the U.S.; here are just a few of them:

- Beaches are America's leading tourist destination. The Clean Beaches Council estimates that approximately 180 million Americans make 2 billion visits to ocean, Gulf and inland beaches each year.
- Visits to the coast far and away exceed those to national parks. In fact, the number of tourists who visit Miami Beach in one year exceeds the number of visits made to any National Park Service property.

- The 2 billion beach visits also dwarf the 138 million visitors to all theme parks in the U.S., including properties of Disney, Six Flags, Universal, SeaWorld, Busch Gardens and other theme parks.
- Finally, it has been documented that U.S. beaches contribute \$322 billion annually to the national economy, which is more than 25 times the \$12 billion contribution made by all our national parks combined.

If you really want to bring change to Washington and shift the paradigm, realize the value and importance of our natural resources to the nation. They are as important to this great country as the man-made infrastructure.

The paradigm shift that needs to take place is to begin attending to domestic problems that have been ignored for too long. We must manage our coast to better protect against the effects of harsh coastal storms and sea level rise, and work to protect and enhance the attributes that the people of this country covet.

There are many current federal and state laws and programs enacted to protect the natural coastal resources of this country. There has been an effort over the past several years to better coordinate these programs, but much more needs to be done.

Strong leadership from the White House is needed to develop efficient, visionary and strategic solutions to coastal management challenges, particularly with the very real threat of increased sea level rise and increased coastal storm intensity resulting from a warming climate. This is imperative.

We need a president who will demand his office properly manage this precious, valuable and threatened natural resource, and who will work in collaboration with the hundreds of coastal managers and scientists around the country to help us go forward more efficiently and for longer term success.

For more information about the importance of America's coast, please feel free to visit www.asbpa.org.

Sincerely,

Tony Pratt
ASBPA board member
Director, Delaware Division of Soil and Water Conservation

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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/about_us/about_us_history.htm.

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.

