

**STATEMENT REACTING TO
THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR AMERICA'S COASTS**

2/1/2010

The American Shore & Beach Preservation Association appreciates the fresh air this Administration has brought to the discussion of coastal issues. From 1995 until recently, no Administration has understood the importance of funding programs that promote sound coastal stewardship as well as providing jobs and other significant benefits for the American people. Unfortunately, the 10 percent reduction for the Corps and the lack of additional funding for the Federal beach nourishment program is significantly discouraging and harmful to reducing coastal risk and protecting the coastal environment.

Beaches are coastal levees, protecting the 55 percent of America's population and the entire infrastructure that serves them from being flattened by storms. Optimal funding for America's beaches is over \$400 million a year. Yet, the Federal government spends a mere \$100 million a year to reduce coastal erosion. Most far smaller European nations spend at least 10 times more. Mr. President, we can and must do more. Yet the President has recommended a mere \$53 million for this critical aspect of coastal stewardship.

The proposed budget does little to reduce coastal hazards or provide incentives for smart coastal growth policies. It does little to promote the protection and restoration of America's coastal environmental resources. It does far too little to promote the creation of jobs through the judicious use of the Federal government's water resources programs. Mr. President, we must do better for the sake of this generation and those to come.

America's water resources system is critical to the Nation's prosperity. As a community of inter-related interests, we provide the water highways to move cargo, as well as the dams, levees, and beaches that reduce critical hazards and provide habitat protection. We create hydroelectric power to decrease both pollution and the Nation's reliance on fossil fuels. We supply irrigation for farmland, maintain coastal and inland water parks for recreation and eco-tourism, and so much more. Together, the minimum budget for the Corps should be \$6 billion. That level of investment would create or preserve over 300,000 permanent jobs. Obviously, the President's budget recommendation of \$4.88 billion is 10% less than Congress appropriated last year and far from the optimal funding needed by America's water resources.

These are difficult financial times for the Federal government. However, even in good times, water resources have been significantly underfunded. Taxpayer dollars funded investments in past decades that have been allowed to deteriorate to the point that they threaten human safety and harm the government's efforts to get America back on the road to prosperity.

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The Corps of Engineers is one of a small handful of Federal agencies who by law must show that their proposed projects will provide at least one dollar of public benefit for every one dollar of taxpayer investment. Yet the President's budget proposal says that most Corps projects must have a 2.5 to 1 return to be eligible to be considered for inclusion in the budget. That completely artificial method of budgeting actually rewards those coastal projects that have the densest development and punishes those who have adopted smart land use policies. For years ASBPA has urged the White House to simply to ask the Corps to prioritize which studies and projects need funding based on factors that include storm damage reduction, coastal hazard reduction, recreational benefits, sea level rise predictions, and environmental resources at risk. Rather than using an artificial standard, this logical approach will provide Congress invaluable guidance by which to make funding decisions.

Over the next several months, ASBPA will work with the Appropriations Committees so that Congress fills as much of the coastal budget chasm created by the President's budget as possible.