

**American Shore & Beach Preservation Association
Statement Submitted to the
House and Senate Energy & Water Development Appropriations
Subcommittees
On the FY 2011 Budget of the Corps of Engineers
March 15, 2010**

I am Mayor Harry Simmons of Caswell Beach, North Carolina and President of the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association. ASBPA appreciates this opportunity to provide written testimony to the House and Senate Energy & Water Appropriations Subcommittees on the FY '11 budget of the Corps of Engineers. Over the years, the Appropriations Committees, and Congress as a whole, have been extremely supportive of what is known as the Federal shore protection program. We are very grateful for the many times you stood up to what has seemed like the never-ending efforts of one Administration after another to cripple or terminate this program. To ASBPA, the Federal coastal restoration program represents our nation's commitment to responsible coastal stewardship.

Our coasts are the gateway to America. They provide the seagoing and intracoastal water highways which carry most of America's commerce. They are the home to hundreds of animal and plant species that are not likely to be found elsewhere. They sustain tens of thousands of middle-class and service worker jobs which, together with taxes on business profits, bring billions of dollars into the Federal Treasury each year. The Federal program that attends to the health of these resources as well as the people who live and work near the coast is actually a series of programs involving several Federal agencies. For the purpose of this statement we are addressing the Corps of Engineers program to restore eroded coastline. However, we hope this Committee will understand the context of our remarks because it is that perspective that is crucial to forging a vision for America's the future of America's coasts.

For over 80 years, ASBPA has fostered the use of sound science to understand and inform a variety of coastal issues. As our name indicates, our primary concern has been the thousands of miles of sandy beaches which must be maintained in a healthy condition to avoid to protect public and private infrastructure as well as human life, and to restore environmental resources. One of the lessons of Katrina and other recent major storms is that beaches and wetlands exist to avoid or mitigate potential catastrophe to the 55 percent of our population that lives on or near the coastline, the public and private infrastructure in those areas, and the unique environmental resources that live and can only thrive in the coastal zone. The Federal coastal restoration program has been a model used by states, local governments and private interests and several

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foreign governments to develop projects based on a very thorough analysis of economic, engineering, and environmental data. Even more significant is the program's requirement of unfettered public access to beaches and other environmental resources that are restored with Federal funds.

Since ASBPA does not advocate for specific projects, our remarks address those programs and policies that enable us all to be good stewards of the coast.

This Administration has been far more willing to discuss and budget for coastal programs and projects that at any time since 1995. That is indeed refreshing. However, the recommendation the President has made in his FY 2011 budget of approximately \$55 million is only one-tenth of what ASBPA's national survey shows as the need for \$460 million for the Federal cost-share of what is needed to fund authorized shoreline projects and studies. Inevitably and regrettably, this optimal funding number increases each year that we have done this analysis. Almost all of that increase is due to the persistent underfunding of ongoing studies and periodic nourishments. As much as we have accurately blamed various Administrations for their failure to support the coastal restoration program, Congress simply has not been able to provide anywhere near the money needed to fund the authorized Corps projects and programs that preserve America's coastal resources. Ironically, the non-Federal sponsors have their 35 to 50 percent share in hand – as fiscally pressed as they are; but the Federal government has been unable to meet its share of the costs since long before the current recession started.

The underfunding of existing coastal projects is threatening to undermine a key aspect of this Federal program that is so attractive to localities and states -- while it has put ongoing studies in a choke hold that seems designed, intentionally or not, to kill each and every one of them.

We are well aware of the fiscal constraints within which the Appropriations Committees must work, and we do not mean to demean the weight of the difficult choices you must make. However, when a program that needs over \$400 million annually consistently receives only \$100 million, we must respectfully ask the Appropriations Committees to re-examine their water resources funding priorities. That \$100 million is equivalent to the cost of a highway interchange on the Interstate. It can also be compared to the 3 billion Euros spent annually by the member nations of the European Union on coastal protection and restoration because they have learned from observing the U.S. just what can happen if these resources are not properly cared for. They are also far ahead of the United States in funding the development of programs and standards for sustainable coastal development, sea level rise, and natural disaster response.

It is the coast that major storms strike first before going inland or back out to sea. It is the coast that contains over half of America's population with an economy that pumps over \$260 billion annually in tax revenues into the Federal Treasury, providing a return of \$320 in taxes for every Federal dollar spent on coastal restoration. It is the coast whose health has a direct affect on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Gulf Coast, and the Great Lakes. It is the coast that is home to estuaries and habitat that does not exist elsewhere in the nation. It is the coast which is the primary conduit for the movement of goods via exports and imports as well as commercial cargo movements by intracoastal waterways. And, of course, it is the coast that is the Mecca for swimming, commercial and recreational fishing and boating, surfing, and so many other uses that contribute so significantly to the national economy and health of the people of this great Nation.

ASBPA is not making these points to say that coastal projects are more important than other categories of water resource project. We are part of the Water Resources Coalition precisely because we are quite aware that the coast is one integral part of a very large and extremely important network of programs that rely on, or are affected by, each other.

Sadly, however, water resources are a step child in the United States. There is more talk in Congress of highways and aviation than about locks and dams, ports, beaches, oceans and estuaries without which there would be far less need for more highways or the expansion of airways and airports. Together with our water resources allies, ASBPA is working to raise the level of awareness of both the benefits and weaknesses of the civil works programs that are funded through the Corps of Engineers budget. We are also supporting efforts to break down the barriers among Federal agencies so that coastal policies and programs can be the result of cooperation rather than a disjointed mélange of separate but parallel efforts. A critical transformation must also encourage states to take on a larger role in water resource planning and execution. In addition, since no effective coastal project or program can be implemented without sound data, ASBPA strongly supports the programs of the Corps and other Federal agencies to increase and improve the capture, collection and dissemination of coastal and ocean data. The fulfillment of the goals we seek will lead to more effective coastal stewardship for our Nation.

ASBPA respectfully asks the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to look beyond the figures that you must confront today and hold hearings to assess the condition of the nation's coastal resources and also gauge their importance to the U.S. economy and ecology. We ask also that you evaluate the role Federal coastal programs play as a defense against natural hazards that can devastate entire regions of the country, as the cog which keeps the wheels of the American economy running, and as the location of commercial and recreational resources that act as a magnet to millions of Americans.

Previous administrations have set up informational barriers that have prevented you from setting priorities for coastal projects. The result is a hodge-podge of funding requests which, by the time the appropriations bill has become law, will at least double the Administration's funding request but regrettably distribute those funds in dribbles to various studies, projects and national programs. The result is an unintended undermining of the congressionally-mandated coastal program. For example, in New Jersey, a project that received initial construction and that was scheduled and in need of periodic nourishment since then has received less than 20 percent of the needed Federal funding. The local sponsor has its money in hand; its Federal partner does not. In California, a project whose feasibility study took well over a decade to be authorized in WRDA 2007 has received no construction funding because of the strictures that apply to "new starts." Once again, the local sponsor has its funding in hand; its Federal partner does not.

These are but two examples of many that show that restoring and preserving America's coasts is a low funding priority until a hurricane or an El Nino hits. There is decay along America's shoreline that is having a devastating effect on economy and ecology. The economic and environmental consequences of this decay are still avoidable, but only if this Congress makes a commitment to coastal America.

There is one more observation that must be made about the Administration's budget proposal. As you know, the Corps has several Continuing Authorities Programs to allocate appropriated funds to small projects, among which are small shore protection projects and regional plans to

promote coastal protection and environmental restoration. We find it odd that, for the very programs designed to enable the Corps to foster smaller coastal restoration efforts, the Administration recommends the perplexing incongruity of both underfunding the program and at the same time earmarking every dollar for programs of its choice. .

Appended to this statement are our recommendations for funding *some* of the national programs promoting coastal stewardship. ASBPA hopes the Subcommittee will give consideration to each of these requests. Thank you for considering our views. We look forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee on the funding and effectiveness of coastal programs.

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ASBPA Corps of Engineers Appropriations Requests and Recommendations

Note: The American Shore & Beach Preservation Association is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization. According to its Bylaws, the American Shore & Beach Preservation may not advocate for or against any specific water resources project. Instead, ASBPA's advocacy efforts are limited to national policies and programs. Many of these understandably have a fairly low profile but high importance. It is, therefore, often difficult for Members of Congress to make a funding request for a national program which may appear to have only a limited impact on their District or State. The Requests and Recommendations that follow are designed to fill any gaps that may have resulted from this difficulty. In each case, we have provided a summary description of the program and the basis for the request. ASBPA has additional information about each of these requests that we would be happy to provide. The requests that follow are too numerous to list in priority order.

1. National Planning Centers of Expertise (GI)

The Corps of Engineers designated six national Planning Centers of Expertise and identified their roles in support of plan formulation and complex technical evaluations associated with plan formulation. These Planning Centers of Expertise provide specialized planning talent to enhance and supplement the capabilities of the districts. They include Deep Draft Navigation and Small Boat Harbors, Inland Navigation, Ecosystem Restoration, Coastal Storm Damage Reduction, Flood Risk Management, and Water Management and Reallocation Studies.

The Centers have an important role to play in the Corps civil works program. Given the fact most Corps Districts do not have full range of expertise needed to do all of the work Congress has tasked to them, the Centers of Expertise are resources that they (as well as the Corps' non-federal partners) can – and should -- call on for help. Regrettably, we have found resistance in some instances to the Coastal PCX being invited to solve problems, provide insight, and be another set of eyes. The Centers help to assure that the studies and analyses the Corps is required to do will be of the highest quality. In providing their expertise, they have saved both the federal government and non-federal sponsors the unnecessary cost and time of work done improperly which then has to be pulled apart and revised.

The Centers do not have, nor do they need, dedicated staff. Personnel at each Center are assigned based on the skills needed in each case. To the extent that these people are on the staff of Divisions, their funding comes from the Division's general expense account. However, when the expertise of District people is needed, their time must be paid for by of a study. In addition, regardless of where the expertise is drawn from, personnel need to have their travel expenses paid. When Division funds are not available to pay these expenses, the requesting District or non-Federal sponsor must find the money.

ASBPA has found that the Coastal & Storm Damage Reduction Planning Center of Expertise (Coastal PCX) has been extremely helpful to Districts and their customers and has increased the

quality of the Corps work product and re-instilled confidence on the part of local sponsors in the Corps of Engineers.

In FY09, Congress designated some funding allocated to the Planning Support Program (GI account) for the 6 Centers. In FY10, the Senate bill designated funding specifically for the Coastal PCX. This was not carried over in Conference.

ASBPA Request: \$1,500,000 for the 6 PCX's as a separate line item under the GI account. There is no funding for the Centers in the President's budget request..

2. Water Resource Priorities Report (GI)

Section 2032 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 mandates a report assign risk and risk reduction in the broadest and yet most practical approach imaginable. Unfortunately, the Corps has requested but not received funding from Congress to do the report.

ASBPA Request: \$2 million. There is no funding including in the President's budget request.

3. Section 2038: National Shoreline Erosion Control Development and Demonstration Program (CG)

Section 227 of WRDA 1992 created a program to test new technologies that will improve the performance of Federal beach restoration projects and reduce their cost. Section 2038 of WRDA 2007 contains important modifications to that program. For example, the original "Section 227" program did not permit the Corps to cost-share these projects with local governments. In addition, where the tested technology has worked, Section 227 did not permit the technology to be seamlessly integrated into an existing Federal beach restoration project. These and other weaknesses have been corrected in Section 2038.

Section 2038 moved the Section 227 program into the Section 103 Small Shoreline Protection Projects Continuing Authorities Program. While the Senate committee viewed this merger as a positive one for both programs, the fact that it is no longer as visible as it once was is working against its survival. The President has earmarked every dollar of the funding he requested for Section 103 projects, and not one of those dollars is requested for the Shoreline Erosion Control development program.

ASBPA Requests: \$8,975,000 to plan, construct, and/or monitor at least 9 demonstration projects in California, New Hampshire, Texas, Michigan, Hawaii, and Ohio. No funding is included in the President's budget request.

4. Regional Sediment Management Research Program (O&M)

RSM is not a faster way to plan and execute water resources projects; it is a better way. It is a systems-based approach that solves sediment-related issues through integrated management of littoral, estuarine, and riverine sediments and projects to achieve the type of balanced and sustainable approach that is lacking when planning and funding is done on a project-by-project

basis. RSM will be a major factor in protecting environmental resources while also bringing efficiencies and greater effectiveness that would otherwise not be achievable.

ASBPA Request: \$9 million to continue Federal-State-local cooperative RSM efforts in New York, Louisiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington State, South Carolina, Florida, and Alabama. The President's has requested \$2 million for this program.

5. Regional Sediment Management Program Authorized by Section 2037 of WRDA 2007 (CG – CAP)

This is now known as the Section 204 program and may be combined with the RSM research program above. This program enables the Corps to do at least two things that the Research program cannot do: (1) Construction RSM projects; and (2) Cooperate with states that have initiated their own RSM studies.

ASBPA Request: \$15 million to fund the planning and construction phases of RSM projects from New England to California. There is no funding included in the President's budget request.

6. National Coastal Mapping Program (O&M)

This is an interagency effort to survey the U.S. shoreline on a recurring basis to support regional sediment management, construction, operations and maintenance, and regulatory functions in the coastal zone.

ASBPA Request: \$13 million to complete the first survey of the entire U.S. shoreline of the lower 48 states. With this data, governmental entities at all levels will be better able to manage America's coastal resources. The President has requested \$7 million for this program

7. Coastal Field Data Collection Program (GI)

Without good data, there can be no project planning for the present and no systems planning for the future. CFDC includes the Corps' Field Research Facility which obtains data on longer-term coastal processes, the Wave Information Study to develop and analyze new surge and wave data. This line item also includes several other programs such as SWIMS, PILOT, and MORPHUS

ASBPA Request: \$6,600,000 to complete construction of projects and continue monitoring and evaluation of completed projects. The President has requested \$1.4 million for all of the programs under this heading.

8. Coastal Data Information Program (GI)

This is the first year the President has proposed funding a separate line item. Nevertheless, this program was established in 1975 and has now been deployed at over 142 stations and has archived 200 GB of wave duty, The CDIP also contains information that is accessed daily by the Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, as well as those commercial fisherman and others in the private sector.

ASBPA Request: \$5 million. The President has requested \$3 million for this program. That level of funding will not be able to expand the program to the East Coast.

9. National Shoreline Management Study (GI)

Authorized by WRDA '99, this study will provide the first detailed report since 1971 on which sections of the U.S. shoreline are accreting and which are eroding. Without this basic information, none of us knows how serious a problem coastal erosion is.

ASBPA Request: \$500,000. The President has requested \$375,000 for this study.

10. National Hurricane Program (GI)

This program is a cooperative effort with FEMA. The studies provided by the National Hurricane Program (NHP) help State and local communities establish evacuation plans by determining the probable effects of a hurricane; predicting public response to the threat and advisories, and identifying appropriate shelters. Specifically, NHP conducts hazard and vulnerability analyses for coastal communities considering different types of storm threats. This includes an assessment of storm surge and wind impacts; existing road and other transportation systems, population (e.g., demographics, behavior analysis) and shelters. This information helps officials determine where individuals are most likely to go when evacuating from a storm.

The NHP assists coastal communities by developing evacuation zones, which helps determine where and when the public should be ordered to evacuate as a storm approaches. This recommendation is negotiated among decision-makers within each community. Once the evacuation zones are established, the NHP provides each community with corresponding evacuation maps and suggested clearance times for the various types of storm categories. The communities determine how to utilize these tools and recommendations, in developing their evacuation plans.

ASBPA Request: \$3 million as a separate line item in O&M. It is currently part of the National Emergency Preparedness Program and was allocated \$1 million from that program in FY 2010.

11. Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE)

According to the President's budget justification for this important category of funds:

“FISCAL YEAR 2011 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: This activity consists of functions required to ensure that USACE activities are ready to provide baseline response to disasters and emergencies. It includes coordination and planning with key local, state and federal stakeholders/partners under the Corps' statutory authority, PL 84-99, and in support of the National Response Framework with Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security. It also allows the Corps to support facilities (e.g. Emergency Operations Centers) and purchase and stockpile some critical supplies. This amount funds salaries for basic mission essential personnel at MSC/Divisions, Districts and support personnel. At this funding level for the annual appropriation, USACE will maintain a lower than historical level of critical

readiness planning, training, exercise, equipment, and stockpiles....Planning and preparedness funding should be sought as part of the regular budget process, instead of relying on emergency supplementals. Recent earthquakes, Nor'easters, ice storms and tsunamis illustrate the need for preparedness funding and the ability to provide trained staff and resources immediately after or even prior to an event.”

ASBPA agrees with the need to include FCCE funding in the regular appropriations bill. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in recent years. When emergencies arise, the Corps has no money on hand to deal with them and must wait for a Supplemental Appropriations Bill for that purpose.

ASBPA Request: \$50 million. The President has requested \$30 million which is substantially below his FY '10 request.