

Coastal Connection

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Current Issues in Washington

Both the House and Senate are expected to consider the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill this week.

The spending package provides additional funds for hurricane relief, military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, avian flu preparations, and border security.

The Senate is also scheduled to consider the Defense Authorization bill this week.

If you have questions or need additional information,
please contact:

beaches@marloweco.com

The Coastal Connection is published weekly when Congress is in session, or as events warrant.

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Legislative Update: Appropriations and WRDA

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate returned from the Memorial Day recess last week and continued to press forward on a variety of legislative items.

The appropriations process continues to move at a fairly rapid pace in the House. The last two remaining bills to be considered by the House Appropriations Committee are scheduled for subcommittee and full committee markups this week.

The full House will consider the Transportation-Treasury-Housing Appropriations bill this week, along with the Emergency Supplemental bill described in the left hand column on this page.

Meanwhile, the Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to announce its subcommittee allocations this week.

These allocations determine the spending ceiling for each of the separate appropriations bills. The overall cap has been set to match the level of the House and the proposed level outlined in the President's budget request.

Subcommittee consideration of appropriations bills could begin next week in the Senate.

WRDA

Negotiations continue in the Senate as the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) inches closer to floor consideration.

Supporters of the bill are working to craft an agreement that will allow a certain number of amendments to be considered when the bill comes before the full Senate.

Coastal News Briefs

- House Resources Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA) introduced a bill last week that reauthorizes a conservation program for wetland ecosystems. The bill number is HR 5539.
- Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff urged a Senate Committee panel last week to keep FEMA under the jurisdiction of his department, predicting a "schizophrenic" response to disasters if FEMA gains autonomy.
- The National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation is hosting Capitol Hill Oceans Week from June 12-14th in the House Science Committee Room (2325 Rayburn House Office Bldg.)

Coastal Group Presses Senate on WRDA

Last week, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) sent the following letter to Senate leaders, asking for immediate consideration of the Water Resources Development Act of 2006 (WRDA). The last WRDA was passed in 2000. The House approved its bill last year.

The American Shore & Beach Preservation Association
Protecting our coastal economy and ecology for 80 years



June 8, 2006

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Jeffords
Ranking Member, EPW Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Bond
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
Ranking Member, T&I Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) fully supports your efforts to pass S. 728, the Water Resources Development Act of 2006 (WRDA). Please continue to press for immediate consideration of this critical piece of legislation in the United States Senate.

As we enter the 2006 hurricane season, coastal communities are facing the possibility of another series of violent and destructive weather events. We know that human lives and public safety depend on a strong civil works program. However, years of planning and preparation are being put at risk as Congress fails to produce a WRDA bill.

Non-federal sponsors are losing patience as important storm damage reduction and flood control projects languish in the absence of Congressional authorization. Above all, public safety and the nation's economy are being jeopardized by the continued delay.

Senate action is needed now. Again, please seek floor consideration of this bill before the July 4th recess. We commend your efforts to advance WRDA and your continued support of America's coastal communities and resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Simmons", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mayor Harry Simmons
President of ASBPA

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Analysis: NC Beach Property Owners Live Across Nation

Using data provided by the three communities on Topsail Island, North Carolina (Topsail Beach, Surf City, and North Topsail Beach), Marlowe & Company staff determined that individuals from across the nation own property on this 26-mile long barrier island in southeast North Carolina.

The red areas on the map below show the primary residence areas for individuals who own property on Topsail Island. The areas are broken down by Congressional District.

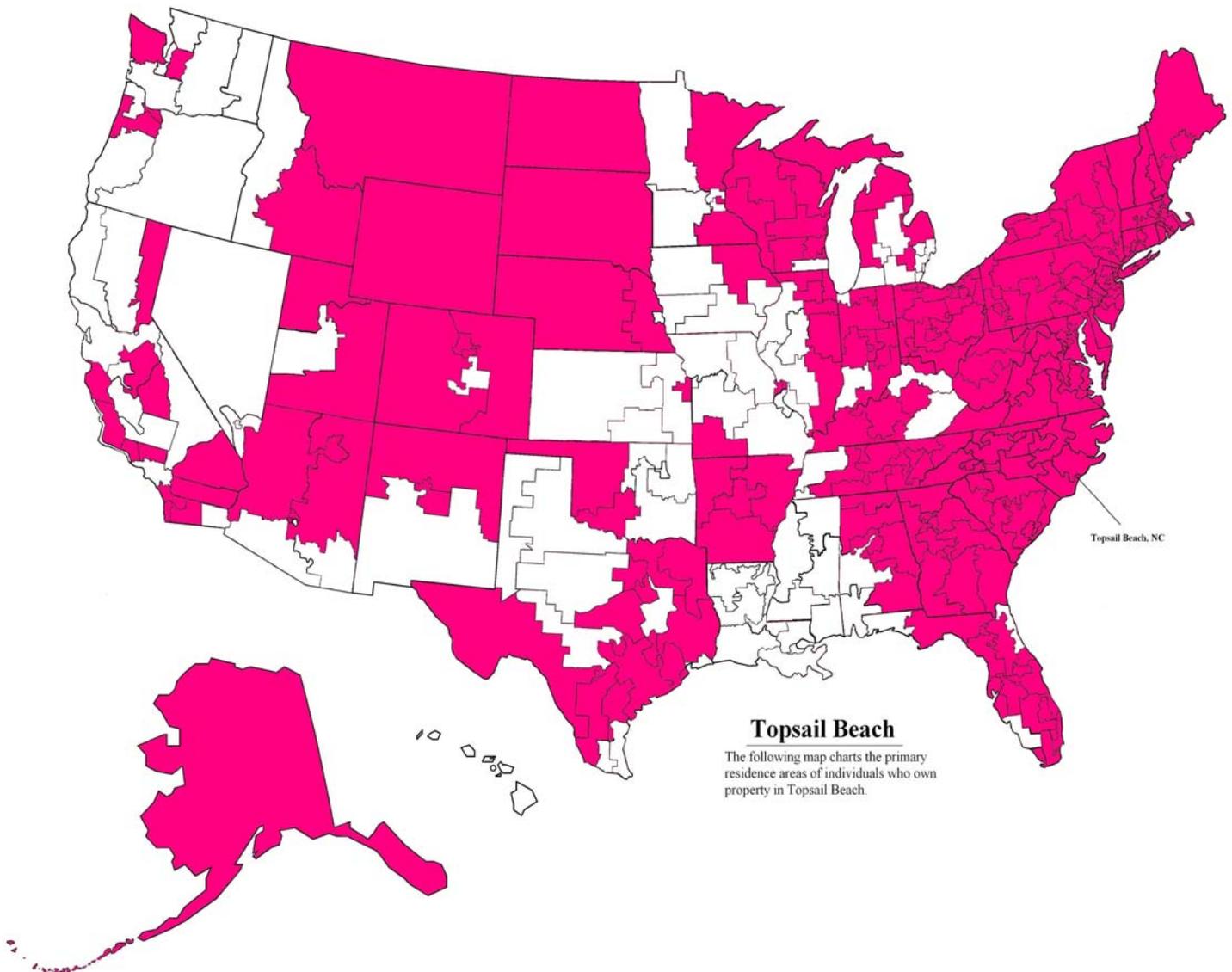
The results of our analysis emphasize the national attraction that Americans have to the coastal areas of the country.

Out of the 435 Congressional Districts in the country, 317 have someone who owns property on Topsail Island.

This analysis did not include any information about visitors to the island. Thousands of seasonal tourists vacation in this area throughout the year.

During World War II, the U.S. Navy transformed the island into a major military facility for testing and launching rockets. The adjoining waterway was dredged and infrastructure was built to support the military operations. After the testing program ended, the government sold the island back to the public.

If your community is interested in a similar analysis, please contact beaches@marloweco.com for more information.



AS BEACH SEASON BEGINS, HELP PROTECT AMERICA'S COASTAL TREASURES

Op-Ed by Mayor Harry Simmons, President of the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association. Simmons is Mayor of Caswell Beach, North Carolina.

Americans have a strong, natural attachment to our beaches – a tie that spans both decades and generations. They truly are a national treasure.

However, this national treasure is facing critical threats to its health like at no other time in recent history. America's shoreline is eroding, with some areas suffering from severe erosion. Beaches are still being closed because of poor water quality. Coastal inlets are being closed or are dangerous to navigate because of poor maintenance.

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) has been working for the past eight decades to restore and protect America's coastal resources, since our founding in New Jersey in 1926. Our organization has a strong network of members from across America, and a strong history of working to combine public policy with sound science for the protection of our coast.

Thankfully, there are many civic and business leaders across America who understand the value of protecting and investing in our coastal resources. Working together, we have been able to accomplish many worthy goals. But we need all of you as we continue to face our coastal challenges.

ASBPA supports preventive measures that help to reduce the impacts of serious hurricanes, such as beach restoration to put back wide beaches, prudent building codes for new construction and appropriate setbacks from the active wave zone. These measures can reduce the high cost of disaster relief and promote the cause of human safety. With another busy hurricane season predicted for this year, coastal preparedness cannot be stressed too often.

We must continue to improve the quality of our recreational waters. It is not enough to combat beach erosion. We have to make sure that states and communities do everything they can to monitor beach water quality and to alert the public when pollution makes going into the water unsafe.

ASBPA was a leader in the effort to establish a federal program that aids states in their efforts to assure clean beach water. This year and last, we have been leading the fight to get this program reauthorized by Congress and to increase the amount of funding available to states under the program.

We have worked hand-in-hand with Members of Congress, the Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other state and federal officials to focus attention and direct resources to the issues important to all of us who live and visit America's beaches. These partnerships will continue and get stronger with all of your help.



The Jersey Shore Partnership held its annual Summer Kick-Off event recently. ASBPA President Harry Simmons and New Jersey Commerce Secretary Virginia Bauer are pictured above at press conference held at Sandy Hook, New Jersey before the event.

If we want future generations to enjoy the benefits of wide, healthy beaches and clean, safe coastal waters, we must continue our advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels of government.

As America's beaches and coastal communities prepare for another summer of fun and record crowds, the time is right to work together for the betterment of our shorelines. I challenge all of you to send postcards from your favorite beach this summer to your Members of Congress, your governor, your state legislators and the president. Include a simple message on the back: "I treasured my visit to this beach and want you to help protect this precious natural resource." Urge your friends, neighbors and family members to do the same thing.

We have done so much for our coasts that we can be proud of ... but we must do a lot more to make future generations proud of us.

www.asbpa.org

Coastal Communities Urged to Unite & Collect Data

Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial start of summer with winter-weary tourists heading outdoors to welcome warm weather and long days. The American Automobile Association (AAA) estimated that 37 million Americans traveled over Memorial Day weekend and about 80% of those people traveled by car. Where did they go? Many of those people headed to America's beaches.

The Washington, DC area alone saw 500,000 people take the roads to visit such destinations as Virginia Beach, Ocean City, Dewey Beach, and Rehoboth Beach. Ron Kuhlman, director of tourism for Virginia Beach, believes that higher gas prices will make regional beaches more appealing as people are not as willing to drive long distances. "In many cases, East Coast destinations such as Virginia Beach sometimes benefit because people who ordinarily take longer drives may consider Virginia Beach when they other-

wise would not have."

What do all of these East Coast beaches have in common? They are all federally nourished beaches supported by the shore protection program through the Civil Works program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

All Americans can enjoy wide, accessible, and safe beaches because local communities and individual states have recognized the value of their beaches and made every effort to protect them. Nor'easters, hurricanes, and other severe weather events eat away at our nation's beaches threatening public infrastructure, private property, and the beaches that provide both recreation and economic opportunities.

Coastal activists from across the country have come together to fight for the shore protection program's survival. A large group of Congressional allies in the House and Senate have fought to restore much needed funding for projects

across the nation. We must continue to support their efforts and develop creative ways to support our cause.

We at Marlowe & Company have asked coastal communities to provide us with beach user data to demonstrate the impact of America's beaches on our national identity and economy.

How many people used your beach on Memorial Day weekend? How about an average weekend in July? Much of this data can be collected from beach surveys, local rental offices, and area Chambers of Commerce. We must engage all facets of our communities to unite in the effort to secure funding for our coastal treasures.

If you would like more information on how to go about collecting this data or if you have data submit, please contact Kim Segal with Marlowe & Company at kim.segal@marloweco.com or 202-775-1796.

Last Wednesday, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson announced his "Plan for Texas Open Beaches." The eight-point plan is a comprehensive effort to address the issue of private property on public beaches in the State of Texas.

The plan includes \$1.3 million in immediate relocation assistance, as well as recommendations that would allow counties to establish guidelines for new construction. The Land Commissioner would also have the authority to deny

state funding for beach renourishment projects until local governments establish those guidelines.

The plan leaves open the prospect for litigation should its proposed incentives fail. In fact, the state is currently pursuing lawsuits against at least 5 of the identified 116 structures it says are now illegally on public land. However, litigation costs have exceeded \$400,000 in some cases, forcing Patterson to concede that incentives are the most cost-effective solution. Property owners have

until October 1 to apply for the \$1.3 million in assistance.

Nevertheless, estimates have projected that the \$1.3 million will only allow for the relocation of one-fourth of the 116 structures.

Critics of the plan have also pointed out that homeowners wouldn't be eligible for state reimbursements until after they had their homes relocated and that the projected \$40,000 per house reimbursement won't cover the current cost of property lots.

Texas Rolls Out "Open Beaches" Plan