

# BEACH NEWS

American Shore & Beach Preservation Association

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Will there be money to help America's beaches recover from the 2008 hurricane season and prepare for 2009?**

FORT MYERS, FL - The 2008 Atlantic hurricane season turned out to be the second most destructive on record, racking up more than \$50 billion in damage. Experts from around the country say beaches did their job of sacrificing sand to protect valuable upland structures, but now the crunch is on to repair the beaches in time for next year's hurricane season, which begins June 1.

"Many of Florida's beaches were in good shape before hurricane season began, and they fared well during the 2008 storm season in Florida," said Debbie Flack, governmental affairs director for the Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association. "But there are a number of beaches that are in need of some post-storm renourishment."

While the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funding for beach/dune recovery projects after a disaster, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may fund repair of federally authorized beach projects, much more funding is needed on a proactive basis to maintain an adequate level of storm damage protection. Many times, that money must come from state and local coffers.

This year, beach advocates in many coastal states are struggling more than ever to spare their beaches from budget cuts during the nationwide economic crisis.

"For example, the state of Florida is facing so many budget reductions that we are having to work extra hard to keep beaches in the mix and our statewide beach management program viable," said Flack.

She explained, "The previous budget passed by the Florida Legislature included \$6 billion in cuts, but we managed to maintain nearly full funding for beaches. While that was a major relief, it is not reasonable to think beaches will be spared again in next year's budget." Florida, like many other states, is facing even further budget cuts in the months ahead as the deepening economic downturn continues to hammer at traditional revenue sources for government operations.

Beach advocates know that in terms of expenses, beaches are a very small piece of the national economic picture, but they continue to remind government budget keepers that beaches are a

good economic engine and that a simple investment in their management can be a strong stimulus to local, state and federal economies.

Some coastal experts have calculated that if a storm hits a community protected by a federally nourished beach, taxpayers save between \$4 and \$5 in storm-related disaster relief for every \$1 spent on nourishing that beach.

"The health of America's beaches is just as important to the economic recovery of this country and the state of Florida as any other component," Flack said. "Wide, healthy beaches support tourism dollars, provide jobs on public works projects and serve as vital storm protection that saves millions of dollars in damages every year. We must continue to fight for those valuable beach dollars."

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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](http://www.asbpa.org).

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