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News Alert

Administration's Policies Put Coastal Residents at Risk

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The nation's oldest coastal preservation organization claims the Bush Administration is needlessly exposing more than half of America's population to avoidable hazards. Opposition to repairing beach erosion is "needlessly putting human lives and livelihoods at risk," according to the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association.

In a sharply-worded letter to President George W. Bush, ASBPA says that it is "baffled by your administration's steadfast opposition to supporting funds for the periodic renourishment of America's beaches." The group's president, Mayor Harry Simmons of Caswell Beach, North Carolina, says that scientists have known for almost a century that the most effective way to reduce storm surge risk to people and property along America's coasts is to establish a system of healthy sandy beaches with dunes. Yet the Bush Administration has opposed funding these projects, claiming their benefits are local or regional, and not national. "There are communities along our nation's coastline which are vulnerable at this very moment to just the kind of post-Katrina devastation your administration is committed to avoid. Some of these are communities that relied on the word of the federal government 20 or more years ago" and entered into cost-sharing agreements with the federal government to maintain their beaches for at least 50 years. Simmons says the communities levied taxes and fees or floated bonds to finance the long-term projects that the Bush Administration is trying to abandon.

Simmons called on the President to change his position for the budget he will present to Congress next February "and signal to the 55 percent of the American people who live within 50 miles of the coast, as well as the tens of millions of others who visit the coast each year, that you place a very high priority on their lives and livelihoods." **[END]** [*Text of Letter Available*]

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