

Replenishing the beaches and the economy of Bethany and South Bethany -- March 2007

When I stood on the steps of Addy Sea Bed & Breakfast in Bethany Beach a few weeks ago, I once again stressed the delegation's commitment to secure the funding needed for Bethany and South Bethany beach replenishment "sooner rather than later." And sooner it is! On March 19, we received the official word that \$14.4 million in federal funds was allocated to protect and fully replenish the severely eroded Bethany and South Bethany beaches. Specifically, federal funding will pump four million yards of sands onto the coastline, providing for the construction of a 100-foot dune and the creation of a 200 foot beach, all to begin soon after Labor Day 2007.

I believe strongly in the federal role for beach replenishment because our beaches are truly a national treasure. Replenishment is vital in reducing storm damage to our coastline and to keeping our coastal residents safe from flooding and storms. All of this is critical to ensuring a lasting tourism economy. Because the beach is one of Delaware's greatest assets -- culturally, economically and environmentally -- I am pleased that the federal delegation could work together with DNREC, the Army Corps, the Office of Management and Budget as well as the Mayors of Bethany and South Bethany, City Council Members and state officials to guarantee the funding, both federal and state, needed to carry out the work.

Realizing the importance of the replenishment to Delaware's beaches, the delegation has been pushing for this project a number of years now. In particular, my efforts to secure this money included reaching out with other House members from coastal states and on my own to senior officials at the Army Corps regarding continued funding for the Bethany/South Bethany Beach project. Over the past five years, the Congressional Delegation has secured almost \$23 million in federal funding for beach replenishment projects and with the new addition of \$14.4 million, the number of funds stands at almost \$38 million. For everyone who has been involved in securing this funding, this accomplishment is certainly something to be proud of.

It is clear from the recent beach replenishment efforts at other beaches along Delaware's coast that replenishment works in providing adequate protection from erosion, highlighting the need to complete the Bethany and South Bethany project swiftly. I look forward to the kick off of the replenishment this fall and to soon looking out with Delawareans and tourists on a fully restored beach from the steps of the Addy Sea.