



U.S. Representative • 9th CD, New York • Brooklyn-Queens

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Report

SWEPT AWAY

Bush Budget Leaves New York Beaches Unprotected



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INTRODUCTION

Every year, New Yorkers shiver through a long winter knowing that when summer finally returns they'll be able to head back out to their favorite beaches. But what they may not know is that area beaches are under assault from beach erosion,

meaning that tidal currents, wave impacts, hurricane and storm damage are literally washing them out to sea.

When the amount of sand on a beach can't keep up with the amount being washed away, that's beach erosion, and it's happening all along our Atlantic and Long Island shorelines.

The good news is that we know how to fight erosion. Traditional means include conducting beach erosion studies, building groins and jetties to protect beaches from surf, storm surge and tidal currents, and long term renourishment efforts like pumping tons of dredged sand back onto eroded beaches.

These projects can be expensive, and can require a commitment sustained over decades. That's why historically the federal government has paid for the majority of the cost (65%), entering into cost sharing agreements with the state (which pays 35%).

Now, here's the bad news: the Bush budget would change all that, cutting federal funding for short term projects, and ending federal participation in long term projects. That would be a disaster for beaches subject to erosion. They would be left defenseless.

To measure the impact of the new Bush policies, Weiner staff looked at shore protection measures underway or planned at 12 area beaches.. Key findings include:

- The Bush budget cuts federal funding for long term beach renourishment programs in New York by \$147,955,000.
- Long Beach loses \$74,295,000 for renourishment, the Fire Island Inlet loses \$32,760,000, Coney Island loses \$26,000,000, Rockaway loses an estimated \$10,000,000, and West Shinnecock loses \$4,900,000.
- Beach renourishment efforts were expected to begin along the coast line from Fire Island to Montauk, at Lake Montauk, and at Mattituck, but under the Bush budget they would get no funding and never get underway.
- The Bush budget cuts or zero funds \$8,037,000 worth of beach erosion studies as well as groins and jetties construction at Coney Island, Rockaway, Fire Island Inlet to Jones Inlet, Fire Island to Montauk Point, Montauk Point, Long Beach, Orchard Beach, the South Shore of Staten Island, Mattituck, Bayville and Asharoken.
- The Bush budget fully funds beach protection projects at only two New York beaches: West of Shinnecock (\$2.4 million to construct groins and jetties), and Lake Montauk (\$300,000 to study erosion).

Beaches and the health of our shorelines are of vital interest to beachfront homeowners, businesses, tourism and vacationers, and environmentalists. The federal government has a vested interest in sustaining these regions, and should take on a substantial role in protecting them. It's clear that cities and states just do not have the resources to do it alone.

But this summer, a new bully has appeared on the beach, and its none other than President Bush. To save our beaches, his policy initiatives cannot become law.

When it comes to our beaches, the federal government must uphold its end of the bargain. Otherwise some of our most wonderful natural resources will literally be washed out to sea.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S NEW BEACH RENOURISHMENT BUDGET

The Bush budget makes two significant changes to how shoreline protection programs have been funded.

First, and most significantly, the Bush budget includes a policy change permanently ending federal participation in long term renourishment programs.

Beach renourishment typically involves pumping tons of dredged sand back onto a beach that is suffering from erosion. The Army Corps of Engineers is the lead federal agency for such projects, which can last for decades, and cost tens of millions of dollars.

The Army Corps of Engineers has been authorized by Congress to conduct beach renourishment at several New York area beaches, and expects to initiate renourishment at several more. But the new Bush policy would mean that none of these projects will happen.

Table 1: Authorized Beach Renourishment Projects That Will Not Be Funded Under Bush Budget

<u>Project Budget</u>	<u>End of Project</u>	<u>Authorized Funding</u>	<u>Bush</u>
Long Beach	2056	\$74,295,000	\$0
Fire Island – Jones In	2027	\$32,760,000	\$0
Coney Island	2036	\$26,000,000	\$0
East Rockaway	2027	\$10,000,000*	\$0
West of Shinnecock	2010	\$4,900,000	\$0
Totals:		\$147,955,000	\$0

*Source: Army Corps of Engineers; *Army Corps estimated cost*

Note: Congress has authorized renourishment at Westhampton Beach at \$46 million through 2027. The Bush budget would zero out the federal participating in the project. However, because of pending litigation, the federal government may, in fact, be compelled to pay its share.

Table 2: Planned Beach Renourishment Projects That Will Not Be Funded Under Bush Budget

Lake Montauk Harbor
 Asharoken
 Bayville
 Mattituck

Source: Army Corps of Engineers

PRESIDENT BUSH'S NEW SHORELINE PROTECTION BUDGET

The second change made by the Bush budget is a dramatic reduction in funds to conduct shore protection projects and studies. In FY' 05, funding is cut by almost 50%, a reduction from \$121,226,000 to \$63,728,000. As a result funding has been cut for beach erosion studies and the construction of groins and jetties at several New York area beaches.

The Army Corp builds groins, jetties and beach fill to redirect damaging tidal currents and provide protection from pounding surf and storm surge.

The Army Corps uses feasibility, reformulation and design studies to ascertain the extent of beach damage and identify the best potential ameliorative measures.

Table 3: Shore Protection Projects

Beach: Bush Budget:	Project:	Authorized Funds:
West Shinnecock \$2,400,000	Beach fill placement	\$2,400,000
Coney Island \$2,000,000	Design groins	\$0
Fire Island Inlet – Montauk \$1,700,000	Reformulation study	\$0
East Rockaway \$0	Reformulation study	\$1,000,000
Long Beach \$1,000,000	Design groins/beach fill	\$0
Orchard Beach \$1,000,000	Design groins/beach fill	\$0
Bayville \$200,000	Feasibility Study	\$582,000
Fire Island – Jones Inlet \$500,000	Design for replenishment	\$0
Lake Montauk Harbor \$300,000	Design for replenishment	\$300,000
South Shore of Staten Island	Feasibility study	

\$225,000	\$0		
Asharoken		Feasibility study	\$205,000
\$175,000			
Montauk Point		Feasibility study	\$100,000
\$0			
Mattituck		Feasibility study	<u>\$100,000</u>
<u>\$0</u>			
			Total: \$11,112,000
\$3,075,000			

Source: Army Corps of Engineers

Note: Congress has authorized the construction of groins and jetties at Westhampton Beach at an FY' 05 level of \$4,200,000. The Bush budget would zero out the federal participating in the project. However, because of pending litigation, the federal government may, in fact, be compelled to pay its share.

Affected Programs—Brief Descriptions

Coney Island

Construction of berms, groins, and fillets to provide storm damage protection for approximately 3 miles of beachfront along the shoreline of Coney Island, as well as periodic renourishment on a 10 year cycle for 50 years.

East Rockaway Inlet to Rockaway Inlet and Jamaica Bay

Study and renourishment of 6.2 miles of beach extending from Beach 149th Street to Beach 19th Street, through 2027.

Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point

Development of hurricane protection and beach erosion control measures for 83 miles of the south shore of Long Island, including beach widening, and the construction of groins.

West of Shinnecock

Beachfill placement and renourishment over the next 6 years to an area just to the west of the Shinnecock Inlet.

Fire Island Inlet to Jones Inlet

Digging of a 14 foot navigable channel and use of sand to renourish shoreline to the west of the Fire Island inlet, and subsequent renourishment cycles for 50 years.

Long Beach

Storm damage reduction measures over 9 miles of ocean front on the south shore of Long Island, from Jones Inlet to East Rockaway Inlet. Includes periodic renourishment on 5 year cycles, for 50 years.

Orchard Beach

Design groins and place beachfill to provide shore protection and staunch erosion on eastern Long Island.

Lake Montauk Harbor

Study of beneficial uses of dredged sand on eroded western shoreline.

Montauk Point

Study to develop most suitable plan to halt storm induced and long term erosion at the eastern end of the southern fork of Long Island.

Asharoken

Surveying and mapping, and the development of data regarding coastal processes on the north shore of Long Island, to develop best means to halt shoreline erosion and improve storm damage protection.

Bayville

Study to identify best means to prevent storm damage protection and beach erosion on the north shore of Long Island extending from Orient Point to the East River.

South Shore of Staten Island

Study to identify best means to prevent storm damage along 13 miles on the coast of Staten Island, from Fort Wadsworth to Tottenville.

Mattituck Inlet

Study to identify causes of beach erosion on the north fork of Long Island.

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