House OKs $30M. for building, beach fixes

From Press staff report

The U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday approved an energy and water development appropriations bill for fiscal year 2006 that contains nearly $30 million for beach replenishment and construction projects in Cape May, Salem and Atlantic counties.


The House approved the bill 399-17. It now goes to the Senate.

"This is certainly good news for southern New Jersey's coastal communities, which rely on federal support to maintain and protect the quality of our beaches," LoBiondo said.

"It cannot be overstated: Beaches mean jobs," he said. "This funding represents a continued commitment by the federal government to enhance the economic strengths of southern New Jersey and will continue to bolster the local economies of our coastal communities."

According to the news release, the bill includes:

- $7 million for environmental restoration at Lower Cape May Meadows. The approximately 350-acre project is designed to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitats in the area—which contains Cape May Point State Park and the Cape May Migratory Bird Refuge. It also is designed to reduce hurricane and storm damage to beaches.
- $2.663 million for beach replenishment at Villas and Reeds Beach in Middle Township.
- $2 million for the ongoing Delaware Bay oyster revitalization project conducted by Rutgers University's Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory in conjunction with the Delaware River Basin Commission. The project is rebuilding oyster reefs with discarded shells to provide an inviting habitat for oyster larvae and thereby improve their survival rates.

The news release quoted Eric Powell, director of the Shellfish Research Laboratory, as saying that the importance of the funds to restore the eastern oyster in Delaware Bay cannot be overstated.

Restoring the oyster stock will improve bay ecology and bring back the prominence of the bay-shore fishery, providing economic benefits for the entire bay-shore region, Powell said.
- $2.850 million for a National Shoreline Erosion Control Demonstration Project. These funds will be distributed among demonstration projects across Cape May County, including one at Cape May Point.
- $1.9 million to continue periodic beach replenishment at Cape May Point, from the 3rd Avenue terminal groin to the Central Avenue groin.
- $869,000 to dredge the Salem River in Salem County.
- $795,000 to dredge Cold Spring Inlet in Cape May.
- $450,000 for ongoing beach-replenishment efforts in Ocean City, from Great Egg Harbor to Peck Beach.
- $400,000 for a Wildwoods beach-replenishment study.
- $995,000 to dredge Absecon Inlet in Atlantic County.