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**North Carolina Beach,
Inlet & Waterway Association**

October 4, 2016

Open letter to Candidates for Federal Office -

In North Carolina, the last major hurricane to make landfall was Hurricane Isabel, 13 years ago. Isabel came as the last of six major hurricanes in 19 years (Gloria, Diana, Emily, Fran and Floyd). Across the United States it has been a record nine years since a Category 3 or greater hurricane struck the U.S. (as large as Hurricane Sandy was, it was only a Category 1). We, the coastal communities, count our blessings as we have watched flooding, wildfire and tornados devastate other parts of the country in recent years.

But we know another hurricane is imminent for the U.S. and for North Carolina. In fact, Hurricane Matthew is now headed in our direction. Rather than simply waiting for the next storm, we should be preparing for it and investing in coastal resilience to minimize the destruction it will cause.

With that in mind, North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association (NCBIWA) and American Shore & Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA), organizations dedicated to advancing science-based policies to protect our coasts, want to know what Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's plans are, and what all federal candidate's plans are, for keeping our coastal communities safe and sustainable. We hope that in the next 5 weeks all the candidates will take a stand on this issue. Both presidential candidates have made statements about the need to invest in infrastructure, but the focus for both has been roads, bridges and transportation corridors.

We would like to know how each would invest in natural coastal infrastructure that protects coastal communities from hurricanes, storms and sea level rise.

Beaches, dunes and wetlands have been shown to significantly reduce flooding and wave damage from coastal storms. During Hurricane Sandy, New Jersey towns that had wide beaches and high, healthy dunes suffered far less damage than towns that had ignored their coastal erosion problems. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimated beach nourishment saved \$1.3 billion in avoided damages.

In North Carolina, we've been nourishing beaches for 50 years. Much of our developed coast has a dune system combined with beach and inlet management plans. These features will protect homes and buildings from storm damage, but only if the beaches and dunes are properly maintained. The current cost of sustaining current conditions of North Carolina beaches is approximately \$55 million annually, but as seas rise, maintenance will need to be more frequent and will become more costly. The responsibility and cost will mostly fall on local and state governments, but federal government needs to support these efforts with funding and planning. This is true for North Carolina and for every state along the Atlantic seaboard.

We shouldn't let a long stretch of comparative calm allow us to become complacent. We know another major hurricane is coming, and it may well be within the next four or eight years -- if not much sooner. Any candidate for federal office, particularly presidential candidates, should be addressing this inevitable threat, and explaining what he or she will do to help our coastal communities prepare.

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An Effective Voice for the North Carolina Coast
www.ncbiwa.org