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SMITH - 'WE MUST PROTECT THE NEW JERSEY SHORE'

DOVER TOWNSHIP - Senate Environment Committee Chairman, Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, issued the following statement after the panel's hearing on beach erosion and fisheries management at the Dover Township Municipal Building today:

"The New Jersey Shore is one of our State's preeminent environmental resources, drawing in millions in tourism dollars each year to our communities, and serving as a point of pride for residents of the Garden State.

"However, without strong protections and proper stewardship, the Shore as we know it today will not be around for future generations of New Jerseyans to appreciate tomorrow.

"Global warming, coastal overdevelopment and ocean dumping threaten to erode our beaches, or at the very least ensure that no one would want to visit them with the toxins in the water.

"While we've made progress with fish management plans, we can do more to promote marine populations, and better serve our State's recreational fishing industry.

"And federal threats of off-shore drilling further endanger the integrity of our coast.

"We must step up to the plate, and do what we can to defend the Shore from environmental hazards and bad public policy. Without action, one of the jewels in New Jersey's environmental crown will be forever lost. However, with State support we can protect New Jersey's beaches for years to come."