



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Study Provides Important Data To Support The Protection Of Surf Breaks And Coastal Environments

Queensland, Australia, July 16, 2007 – A new website, www.goodfortheplanet.com is rapidly growing in importance in the surfing world. The site supports the collection of data aimed at determining the social and economic value of surfing to coastal communities. This innovative study is designed to increase awareness about the value to local areas of the multi-billion dollar surfing industry. With global participation estimated to be over 20 million people, data from the study demonstrates how inappropriate development and environmental negligence may put surf breaks at risk.

The surfing community represents a very profitable and expanding market with over 2½ million surfers in the USA and more than 2 million in Australia. Europe, Japan and South America also have significant levels of involvement. Participation is strongest amongst males 16-40 but there is a growing level of interest and activity among females and also males over 40. The industry is estimated to be worth over \$10 billion globally. The popularity of longboards, which make learning to surf easier, the growth of surf schools and the 'coolness' and 'style' of surf culture make surfing more popular than ever before. Surfing is also a driving force behind the desire for many people to relocate to coastal areas, and plays an essential role in recreation and tourism strategies for business and government.

In recent years, however, many coastal communities have been confronted by planning and development decisions, which negatively affect surfing and the surfing lifestyle. According to Project Director, Neil Lazarow, the Good for the Planet project is dedicated to maintaining and sharing the benefits of surfing.

"The project uses a range of socio-economic techniques to collect benchmark data on the market and non-market value of recreational surfing to particular locales," explained Lazarow. "It has already been used to advocate for the protection of surfing amenity in a number of locations."

Lazarow continued, "Surf breaks are being damaged or destroyed though inappropriate development in coastal areas and the ocean continues to be polluted with the result that the natural environment - the very thing that sustains the surfing lifestyle and economy of surfing - is being degraded. That is our legacy. Unlike football fields, surf breaks can't simply be reconstructed down the road."

The study has been welcomed by the Surfrider Foundation and Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) President, Wayne "Rabbit" Bartholomew.

"For many years surfers have been powerless to stop our beaches and waves from being polluted, tampered with or destroyed. I believe this study will demonstrate the significant economic and social benefit that surfing has to communities and will help surfers advocate for better management of the coastal environment. I encourage every surfer and ocean lover to take a few minutes out of their day and complete a survey," said Bartholomew.

Lazarow says that information collected through the surveys together with data collected through other sources and techniques provides substantial evidence of the value of surfing to many coastal areas. The data will be used to lobby government and business for their support of surfing and protection of the environment that sustains this burgeoning economic and lifestyle interest.

NB: All participants who complete a survey before August 15 will go into the draw to win a new custom shaped board. For more information, please visit www.goodfortheplanet.com.

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