



Dauphin Island, Alabama

Legislative & federal agency agenda: 2018

1. Working together for coastal funding: infrastructure, restoration, resilience and research

Coastal vulnerabilities in the United States were exposed in 2017; in 2018, we need to use science and policy to improve our nation's coastal resilience. This will take funding at all levels. The U.S. must invest in natural coastal infrastructure and coastal research to protect coastal communities, support local economies, and better prepare for future hazards. Rebuilding beaches, dunes and wetlands will put Americans back to work and protect millions of jobs in the tourism economy. ASBPA supports the following policies to sensibly invest in healthy coastlines:

Congress should:

A) Immediately invest in coastal infrastructure to protect communities.

The U.S. must invest in coastal flood risk reduction before the next hurricane hits. Wide beaches and high dunes have continued to demonstrate their ability to protect homes, property and critical infrastructure from coastal flooding. Investing in protection is far cheaper than paying for rebuilding and restoring coastlines generates

jobs: engineering and construction jobs, and protects and creates jobs in transportation, recreation and tourism, fishing and more.

- Provide \$5 billion over 10 years to federal, state and local beaches, dunes, wetlands and other coastal risk reduction, erosion control, and habitat infrastructure to address backlog in authorized projects and provide a "down payment" on projects in development.

- Any major infrastructure legislation should explicitly allow funding to be used for coastal, nature-based infrastructure (such as beaches, dunes and wetlands).

- Pass a 2017 disaster supplemental appropriations bill that:

- Provides supplemental Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE) funding to rebuild all beach and dune systems eroded by the 2017 hurricanes;

- Funds federally authorized but unconstructed coastal storm damage risk reduction projects along coastlines impacted by 2017 hurricanes;

- Fully funds, at full federal expense, the South Atlantic Coastal Study (SACS) authorized in the WIIN Act (Sec. 1204).

- Funds coastal research that will lead to communities better able to withstand future hurricanes.

Founded in 1926, ASBPA is dedicated to preserving, protecting and enhancing our coasts by merging science and public policy.

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Agency acronyms:

- BOEM — Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- NOAA — National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency
- NMFS — National Marine Fisheries Service
- USACE — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- USFWS — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USGS — U.S. Geological Survey

- Appropriate \$1.8 million for BOEM's Marine Minerals Program (MMP); and \$2.5 million for MMP environmental studies.

- Increase funding to coastal permitting agencies, including USACE, NMFS, and USFWS, to address permitting needs and reduce the consultation backlog.

■ Conduct a national study on the economic value of coastal infrastructure to determine full cost and benefits to coastal projects.

■ Provide adequate appropriations for key coastal programs

There are many important coastal appropriations spread across many agencies. In particular, Congress should:

- Appropriate at least \$75 million for Shore Protection in USACE Civil Works construction.

- Appropriate \$4.8 million for Regional Sediment Management (RSM) in USACE Civil Works.

- Appropriate \$6 million for a SACS (Sec. 1204 of the WIIN Act.)

- Appropriate at least \$40 million for USGS Coastal and Marine Geology Program (CMGP).

- Appropriate at least \$15 million for NOAA Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program.

B) Provide long-term coastal funding from coastal and offshore development.

The need for coastal restoration and protection will continue to grow as sea levels rise and development in the coastal zone increases. Regular and dedicated funding for coastal protection should be tied to new development, in particular any industrial development.

■ Maintain existing sources of dedicated funding for coastal protection tied to offshore energy production — such as the Gulf Coast restoration funding provided in the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA)

■ Ensure lease fees for any new offshore energy production — whether renewable or fossil fuel — should (in part) be dedicated to coastal protection.

■ Support legislation that provides new dedicated coastal funds.

■ Support pathways for public-private partnerships that match private investment dollars with reduced financial liability and federal and state investment in coastal, nature-based infrastructure.

C) Pass a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)

Congress must continue a two-year cycle for passing WRDAs and pass a WRDA in 2018. That bill should include:

■ Policy that requires the USACE to develop, and maintain, a multi-year schedule of priorities for federally-authorized coastal projects that incorporates a regional approach to coastal resilience.

■ Policy that requires the Corps to calculate the full range of benefits when evaluating coastal projects, including:

- Reducing storm damage to property and infrastructure; promoting public safety; protecting, restoring, and creating aquatic ecosystem habitats; enhancing shorelines; promoting recreation; supporting risk management adaptation; other public economic or environmental benefits.

■ Language to clarify that Flood Control and Coastal Emergency (FCCE) funding should be used to repair damaged beaches to pre-storm levels and bring the beach to its design level of protection.

■ Authorize a California Sediment Management program.



Sandbridge Beach, Virginia Beach, Virginia



Phipps Ocean Park, Palm Beach, Florida



Popponesset Spit, Massachusetts

Federal agencies should:

A) Request coastal funding commensurate to the challenges faced.

Although Congress ultimately funds the government, funding is partially determined by what agencies' request.

■ Coastal restoration, resilience and research programs at NOAA, USGS, BOEM, and USACE and coastal regulatory programs at NOAA, USFWS, BOEM and USACE should, at minimum, be maintained at FY17 funding levels.

■ USACE should expedite coastal projects funded by disaster supplement funding.

B) Use Hazard Mitigation Grants to reduce coastal vulnerability

Investing in coastal preparedness and resilience is much cheaper than disaster recovery. FEMA should utilize its existing grant program to address coastal preparedness.

■ Hazard Mitigation Grants should get increased funding;

■ FEMA should fund coastal communities applying for Hazard Mitigation Grants.

2) Working together to expedite coastal project implementation

Coastal projects that seek to improve community resilience and restore habitat need to be implemented without delay. Permitting coastal

projects should be expedited without undermining environmental protections. ASBPA supports the following to improve regulatory and review processes:

Federal agencies should:

A) Expedite regulatory and permitting timeframes

Regulations around coastal projects are critical to protecting species, clean water and other ecosystem functions. However, implementation of regulations is often inefficient, and duplicative and individual permitting for similar projects and across regulatory jurisdictions adds unnecessary time and costs to projects. In order to improve regulatory timeframes:

■ USACE and NMFS Protected Resources Division (PRD) should reduce the overall number of individual consultations:

- Provide training and protocols to staff to clarify which determinations can be made without formal or informal consultation with NMFS;

- Provide timely updates of Programmatic Biological Opinions;

■ NMFS should reduce bureaucratic delays in its approval process:

- NMFS scientists should engage in early scoping meetings;

- Department of Commerce should allow NFMS project biologists and regional council to make final decisions.

■ NMFS should continue to expand its pilot project on Letters of Consultation to satisfy Section 7 consultations.

■ USFWS and USACE should collaborate to develop programmatic biological opinions for beach nourishment projects regionally, as appropriate.

■ In the absence of sufficient federal funding, NMFS, USFWS, and USACE should seek out collaborative agreements with state agencies to allow the state to fund a regulatory staff position within the permitting agency.

B) Advance Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials (BUDM) and RSM

Often the cheapest way to restore a beach or coastal system is to use the dredged or spoil material from a navigation project, however bureaucratic policies can make this funding difficult or impossible to obtain. To improve use of BUDM and RSM:

■ USACE should develop guidance and establish the pilot program for BUDM as required by Sec. 1122 of the WIIN Act.

■ All USACE districts should adopt RSM practices and budgeting.

C) Coastal regulatory processes should be collaborative and science-based.

USACE should improve efficiency and coordination so as to speed-up decision making while still ensuring that all public benefits and public costs are weighed in the regulatory process. USACE regulatory should:

■ Improve collaboration with federal and state resource agencies, and ensure collaboration is kept to an agreed upon timeline;

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- Ensure federal agencies demonstrate that coastal resource management science is the basis for decisions;

- Value sediment as a resource, not a waste product.

D) Regulatory reform should help advance coastal resilience.

As the administration and federal agencies review regulatory processes, they should maintain regulations that will help communities become more resilient and should not implement reforms that will hinder coastal resilience.

- Regulations for coastal development or restoration should consider future conditions and/or sea level rise.

- The Coastal Barrier Resource Act (CBRA) should be reauthorized, but allow developed communities adjacent to CBRA-zone properties to improve their resilience.

3) Working together for regional resilience

Coastal vulnerability doesn't end with political boundaries. Improving regional resilience will take science and policy working together across state lines and collaboration across jurisdictions. ASBPA supports the following in implementing regional and state coastal plans:

Congress should:

A) Fund USACE Comprehensive Coastal Studies

The North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS) put forth a strategy for integrating shore protection with estuarine and environmental restoration, using structural, nonstructural and "nature & nature based features" (NNBF) in the region hit by Hurricane Sandy. Other regions of the country should benefit from similar regional studies. Congress should:

- Fund a South Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (Sec. 1204 of the WIIN Act);

- Fund a Great Lakes Coastal Resilience Study;

- Continue to support the Coastal Texas Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Study.

Federal agencies should:

A) Restore the Gulf Coast

Following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, billions of dollars have become available to restore the Gulf Coast.

- Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) trustees and the RESTORE Council should ensure funding that they control is spent only on improving the environmental health of the coast and is spent on science-based restoration projects.

- The RESTORE Council and BOEM should develop a Gulf-wide sediment budget and off-shore sediment assessment.

B) Advance the North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS)

- USACE should finish construction on the remaining authorized projects in the region hit by Hurricane Sandy that were funded by the "Sandy Supplemental" appropriation.

C) Begin a South Atlantic Comprehensive Study

- Using the authority granted in the WIIN Act and authorities available through work on RSM, the USACE South Atlantic Division (SAD) should assess coastal flood risk and vulnerabilities to hurricanes, storms and sea level rise in its region.