



## **A Joint Call for the Improved Management of America's Beaches**

The Coastal States Organization (CSO), which represents the Governors of the thirty-five coastal states, territories, and commonwealths on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes issues, joins the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA), which is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the beaches, shores, and other coastal resources of America, in this joint call to improve the management of our ocean and Great Lakes beaches. Beaches are the leading tourist destination in the United States, and tourism is one of our nation's largest industries. Beaches also help protect public and private infrastructure, large and small businesses, and state and local tax bases from coastal storm damage. In most cases, natural and managed beaches out-perform hardened structures and shoreline armoring. Beaches and dunes also provide significant coastal habitats for marine fisheries, shorebirds, and sea turtles.

Despite this significant range of benefits to coastal communities and all visitors to the coast, no coordinated federal, state, and local management framework currently exists to address significant threats from beach erosion and coastal storms. Given the staggering losses and lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina, Ike, Sandy, and other extreme coastal storm events, as well as the significant implications of beach erosion occurring in coastal regions across the United States, CSO and ASBPA seek a common goal: maintaining healthy beaches, dunes, and coastal inlets while ensuring responsible coastal development.

The Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) already provides an important framework for addressing coastal issues. We believe the CZMA provides a solid foundation for new innovations in beach management because of its voluntary nature, comprehensive approach, strong focus on agency coordination, and demonstrated successes in beach and inlet management.

CSO and ASBPA call on Congress and the Administration to support a new, coordinated approach to beach management. We believe that the proposed measures present a bi-partisan, balanced approach that will offset modest investments with direct cost-savings and regulatory streamlining. These measures will result in increased resilience of beach communities as well as healthier beaches and dune ecosystems.

Therefore, CSO and ASBPA strongly support the following five policy positions in bold. Further, we commit to continue our collaboration, and to explore and pursue the sub-actions following each policy position:

- 1) Ensure beach-compatible dredged materials are beneficially used through the establishment of a national policy, which may include:**
  - a) A Presidential Executive Order and/or a Joint Resolution of Congress;
  - b) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) support for states to include "beneficial use" policies in their coastal management programs for use under federal consistency authorities of the CZMA;
  - c) Technical, environmental, and financial support for Regional Sediment Management (RSM) activities within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in partnership with coastal states; and/or
  - d) A new national understanding of the federal standard that, as part of USACE determinations of the "least cost alternative" for the disposal of dredged materials, the USACE include the economic evaluation of sand, including ecosystem restoration benefits, storm damage reduction benefits, and other economic values and long-term costs.

**2) Promote streamlined permitting of beach and inlet management projects by providing additional funding to coastal states through the CZMA to advance upfront coordination with federal agencies, by (for example):**

- a) Supporting voluntary pilot programs for coastal states to explore and develop innovative permitting approaches, which could include:
  - i) State-led programmatic, integrated Biological Opinions to meet Endangered Species Act requirements for coastal threatened and endangered species in coordination with the NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Department of the Interior's (DOI's) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS);
  - ii) State-led programmatic, integrated Essential Fisheries Habitat (EFH) assessments to meet Magnuson Fishery Conservation Act requirements in coordination with the NMFS; and/or
  - iii) State-led Regional General Permits or other agency-to-agency agreements with the USACE for beach and inlet management projects within state waters (generally 3 nautical miles offshore) that allow state programs to lead coordinated federal/state permit reviews.
- b) Developing state and/or local beach/sediment management plans, which may include:
  - i) Integrated environmental studies and assessments of the positive and negative impacts of future beach and inlet projects, consistent with state and local programs and statutes;
  - ii) Identification of future sand resources and needs; and/or
  - iii) Opportunities for cost efficiencies and streamlined permitting.

**3) Encourage predictable funding of coastal storm damage reduction projects, by (for example):**

- a) Requiring the USACE, in coordination with each coastal state, to develop and update a 10-year schedule of priorities for federally-authorized beach and inlet projects;
- b) In partnership with coastal states, developing a collaborative and comprehensive strategy for project planning, funding, and management through regional approaches (e.g. watershed and coastal systems-based budgeting); and/or
- c) Developing a clear procedure for extending authorizations for USACE sponsored storm damage reduction projects that are nearing the end of their original 50-year authorization, following review and project modifications to ensure compliance with current environmental and coastal management regulations.

**4) Encourage responsible beachfront building setbacks, redevelopment standards, and construction practices, including voluntary relocation programs, by (for example):**

- a) Authorizing (or requiring) the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to approve National Flood Insurance (NFIP) claims for relocation or removal of insured structures that are under imminent threat of collapse due to shoreline erosion and/or regular tidal scouring;
- b) Requiring FEMA to better align Community Rating System (CRS) credits with successful beach management practices and outcomes in coordination with the coastal states and relevant federal agencies;
- c) Continuing support of the federal CZMA for state programs to formulate, adopt, and implement appropriate shoreline and beachfront construction and redevelopment standards; and/or
- d) Requiring FEMA to consider beach and inlet management needs in all state, county, and local hazard mitigation planning and disaster mitigation funding programs.

**5) Authorize and fund a national study to coordinate and implement efficiencies across federal, state, and local beach mapping programs:**

- a) Review existing programs for beach mapping and monitoring at the federal, state, and local levels;
- b) Identify overlapping federal, state, and local monitoring/mapping requirements and programs; and
- c) Recommend more efficient, coordinated federal, state, and local investments in mapping and monitoring.