

2021 & 2022 Legislative & Federal Agency Agenda for Coastal Resilience

South Benson Marina/Jennings Beach, Connecticut, a 2020 Best Restored Beach

The climate is changing and our coasts are facing unprecedented threats — from sea level rise and increasing storm intensity to ongoing erosion and sediment loss. The new Administration and 117th Congress must take major actions to restore and preserve America's shores and beaches. As we wade into these new waters, the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) recommends the following actions to improve the nation's coastal resilience:

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American Shore & Beach Preservation Association

Advocating for healthy coastlines

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

1: Investment

The federal government must invest in coastal resilience, restoration, sediment management and research at a scale commensurate with the challenge.

Congress should:

■ *Fund communities impacted by COVID.*

Many coastal communities rely on tourism funds to maintain their coastlines and drive their local economy. The impact of COVID-related loss of revenue in 2020 will be felt for years.

- **Fund state and local governments** to offset budget losses.
- **Increase funding to local coastal grant programs and reduce local cost-share for federally funding coastal projects.**

■ *Invest in resilience*

Preparing for and adapting to climate impacts and coastal hazards is essential and cost-effective. The US needs to invest in natural infrastructure (including beaches, dunes and wetlands) for resilience, while rebuilding the most vulnerable infrastructure in less risky areas.

- **Pass comprehensive infrastructure legislation that invests in coastal resilience and restoration**, including:
 - \$3 billion for coastal resilience

- **Provide adequate appropriations for key coastal programs**, including:

- \$55 million for USACE Shore Protection.
- \$30 million for USACE Regional Sediment Management (RSM) and Beneficial Use of Dredge Material (BUDM).
- \$46 million for USGS Coastal and Marine Geology Program (CMGP).
- \$30 million for NOAA Title IX/Coastal Resilience Grants
- \$87 million for NOAA Coastal Management Grants.
- \$6 million for BOEM's Marine Minerals Program (MMP).
- \$10 million for EPA BEACH Act

- **Build back better after disasters**, via supplemental appropriations that fund restoring coastal systems with added resilience and options for re-building infrastructure in less flood-prone areas.

- **Offer grants and loan or revolving fund options for natural infrastructure** and coastal adaptation.

■ *Fund resilience via energy development*

Coastal funding needs to be predictable and should come from extractive industries, such as energy production, that are reliant on healthy coastlines.



Keansburg, New Jersey, a 2020 Best Restored Beach

Agency acronyms:

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

• Increase **funding for Gulf Coast restoration** provided through the **Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA)**

• **Pass the OFFSHORE Act** (or similar legislation) that provides coastal resilience funding from offshore wind and renewable lease fees.

• Ensure lease fees for new offshore energy production funds coastal resilience.

■ **Pass a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)**

The 117th Congress must continue a two-year cycle for passing WRDAs; WRDA should:

- Advance **natural infrastructure**;
- Support **regional sediment management (RSM)** and **beneficial use of dredged material (BUDM)**;
- **Modify the USACE Benefit-Cost-Ratio** to calculate full project benefits.

Federal agencies should:

■ **Implement WRDA**

- USACE should develop **implementation guidance for all policies in WRDA** within 6 months of passage;
- USACE should fully implement policies on **natural infrastructure, RSM & BUDM, and beach and shore protection** from WRDA 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020.

■ **Implement coastal budgeting reform policies**

• USACE and other coastal agencies should fully implement the updated “Principles, Requirements and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources.”

■ **Expedite appropriated funding going to coastal projects**

• OMB and USACE should establish a transparent process to identify the funding status of every active coastal project in the USACE workplan.

■ **Request coastal funding commensurate to the challenges faced.**

• **The administration’s budget** request should include coastal restoration, resilience, sediment management, and research programs at **USACE, NOAA, USGS, BOEM, and USFWS at least at FY21 authorized funding levels.**

2: Implementation

The federal government must advance resilience and restoration projects through collaborative, risk-informed decision-making that prioritizes action over inaction, with regulatory standards that protect environmental resources over the long-term.

Congress should:

■ **Fund regulatory agencies**

Regulatory agencies need to be staffed at levels that allow them complete permitting on time.

- Increase appropriations to USACE, NMFS, USFWS and EPA regulatory programs

Federal agencies should:

■ **Expedite regulatory and permitting timeframes**

USACE, USFWS, EPA and NMFS can all improve the efficiency of their regulatory processes that impact coastal resilience projects.

• Coordinate across agencies to provide unified regulatory response — such as “One Federal Decision” — for coastal projects:

— All commenting regulatory agencies should participate in a pre-application meeting, and develop and adhere to a project timetable;

— All review agencies should prepare a single EIS and sign a single Record of Decision (ROD).

• NMFS should reduce bureaucratic delays in its approval process:

— NMFS scientists should engage in early scoping meetings;

— Department of Commerce should allow NMFS project biologists and regional council to make final decisions.

- 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.**

■ **Beneficially use dredged material**

Uncontaminated dredged material should be used for coastal resilience when possible.

- USACE should **calculate the full and potential value of sediment in calculating the Federal Standard;**

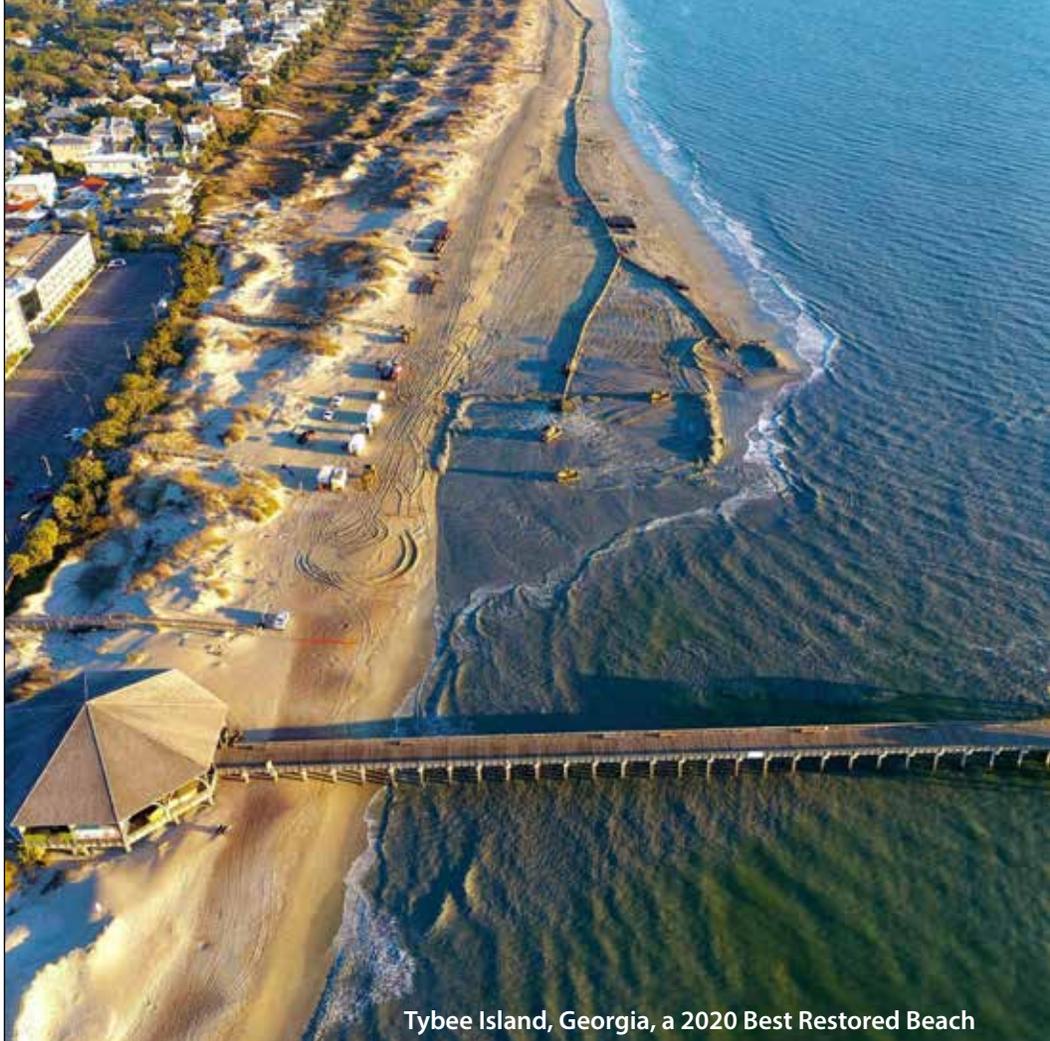
- USACE and EPA should **clarify regulations for thin layer placement of BUDM** to acknowledge short term impacts can be offset by long term benefits.

■ **Review and update regulations to help advance coastal resilience**

The administration should review and reform regulations that impede coastal adaptation to climate impacts (sea level rise, increasing storm intensity, etc.).

- All regulations for coastal development or restoration should **consider future conditions including sea level rise** and other coastal hazards;

- The **Coastal Barrier Resource Act (CBRA)** should allow developed communities *adjacent* to CBRA-zone



Tybee Island, Georgia, a 2020 Best Restored Beach

properties to improve their resilience in the most efficient manner possible that does not undermine the purpose of CBRA;

- Authorize NFIP claims for struc-

tures under imminent threat, and establish a program to pay for relocation or removal of structures;

- Requiring FEMA to **better align Community Rating System (CRS) credits with successful beach management practices and outcomes;**

- **Prioritize natural infrastructure solutions** for coastal resilience in FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program.

3: Regional planning

The federal government must support state and regional efforts to plan and implement systemic coastal resilience, beyond just project-based responses to local vulnerability.

Congress and federal agencies should:

■ **Atlantic Coast**

The North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS) and the South



Cardiff State Beach, California, a 2020 Best Restored Beach



Norriego Point, Florida, a 2020 Best Restored Beach

Atlantic Coast Study (SACS, which includes part of the Gulf Coast) look at resilience needs along the whole eastern seaboard, but project implementation and more detailed analysis is needed.

- Undertake coastal **watershed risk reduction studies** that include natural infrastructure solutions;
- **Complete SACS;**
- Implement **recommendations from SACS SAND study;**
- Allow for **modification to federal coastal projects to improve resilience** (e.g. add dunes) without full reauthorization process.

■ *Gulf Coast*

- Ensure **Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) and RESTORE Council funds are spent on improving the environmental health of the coast;**
- State coastal planning efforts (such as Louisiana Coastal Master

Plan and the Texas Coastal Areas plan) **should prioritize natural infrastructure and consider moving infrastructure out of the coastal flood zone** to ensure the viability of beach, dune and marsh systems.

■ *Pacific Coast*

- Have each USACE district with Pacific Coast jurisdiction (including Honolulu) determine time and funding needs to participate in a region-wide resilience and sediment management study;
- Authorize a **Pacific Coast Resilience Study.**

■ *Great Lakes*

- Include the **Great Lakes Coastal Resilience Study (GLCRS)** as a “new start” and **fund it;**
- **Develop a comprehensive plan to address erosion challenges** due to record high lake levels.

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