



COASTAL STATES ORGANIZATION

**Official Written Testimony for Fiscal Year 2010
Submitted to the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
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**Submitted By
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The Coastal States Organization (CSO) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that represents the interests of the Governors of the 35 coastal states, territories and commonwealths in Washington, DC. Established in 1970, CSO focuses on legislative and policy issues relating to the sound management of coastal, Great Lakes, and ocean resources and is recognized as the trusted representative of the collective interests of the coastal states on coastal and ocean management. For fiscal year 2010, CSO supports the following coastal programs and funding levels within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):

Coastal Zone Management Program (§§306/306A/309)	\$100 million
Coastal Zone Management Act Administration	\$12.4 million
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program	\$60 million
Coral Reef Conservation Program	\$33 million

Every American, regardless of where he or she lives, is fundamentally connected to our coasts, oceans, and Great Lakes. They are a critical framework for commerce, recreation, energy, environment, and quality of life. Though federal funding does not reflect it, the oceans and coasts provide an irreplaceable contribution to our nation's economy and quality of life. Even though the coastal zone makes up only 17% of the land area of the United States, 53% of the nation's population lives there. The annual economic activity for the ocean is in excess of \$117 billion dollars and two million jobs. In recent years, employment growth along the coasts was nearly three times population growth. Our ocean and coasts are not just places we enjoy; they are a vital part of our nation's economy.

Today, our nation's coasts are as vital for our future as they are vulnerable. As a result of their increasing draw and economic vitality, we are loving our coasts to death: an increasing number of uses along our coasts and in our oceans results in conflicts. This demand on coastal resources combines with an increase in natural hazards such as sea level rise, hurricanes and other flooding events and the evidence shows that coastal communities and the U.S. as a whole are in danger of losing these invaluable assets. Despite the difficult budgetary times, we need to provide more

funding and support for the key programs that are on the front lines of this daily battle, the programs utilizing the advances in coastal and ocean science, research, and technology to *manage* our coastal and ocean resources for future generations.

Programs that are engaged in these important efforts and working to balance the protection of coastal and ocean resources with the need for sustainable development include the Coastal Zone Management Program, Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection Program, and the Coral Reef Conservation Program. These programs reside within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and provide *direct* funding or services to the states and territories, which account for a small portion of the total NOAA federal budget. The funding for these programs is very cost-effective, as these grants are matched by the states and are used to leverage significantly more private and local investment in our nation's coasts. Increased funding for these programs that provide on-the-ground services to our local communities and citizens is well worth the investment.

Coastal Zone Management Program (§§306/306A/309)

CSO requests that these grants be funded at a level of *\$100 million dollars*, an amount that will be shared among the 34 states and territories that have approved coastal zone management programs. Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), NOAA and the states partner to implement coastal zone management programs designed to balance protection of coastal and ocean resources with the need for sustainable development of coastal communities. States have the flexibility to develop programs, policies and strategies that are targeted to their state priorities while advancing national goals. Under the CZMA program, the states receive grants from NOAA that are matched by the states and are used to leverage significantly more private and local investment in our nation's coastal areas. These grants have been used to reduce environmental impacts of coastal development, resolve conflicts between competing coastal uses, and provide critical assistance to local communities in coastal planning and resource protection.

The CZMA state grants have essentially remained level-funded for 8 years, resulting in a decreased capacity in the state coastal zone management programs and less funding being granted out to local communities. In addition, states and territories find they are unable to keep up with the increasing complex coastal challenges, including the immediate need for communities to begin to adapt to climate change and address sea level rise, as well as the preparation for and siting of proposed alternative energy facilities in near shore waters. The investment provided to actually manage our coastal resources, while consistently insufficient, is now losing pace with the demands on these resources and coastal managers.

Under the current level of funding, most states and territories receive between \$850,000 and \$2,000,000 to carry out their coastal management programs based on a formula accounting for shoreline miles and coastal population. Appropriate at the time, a cap of \$2,000,000 was instituted years ago to allow for funding to spread more evenly across the states and territories, so as to prevent most of the funding from going entirely to the larger, more heavily populated states. But, now, over half of the states have met the cap and no longer receive an increase in funding, despite increased overall funding for

CZMA state grants. Therefore, CSO requests that language be included in the appropriations bill declaring that each state will receive *no less than 1% and no more than 5% of the additional funds over and above previous appropriations*. In addition, to prevent any undue administrative fees from NOAA from being levied on these grants, CSO requests that language be included in the appropriations bill stating that *no general administrative charge shall be applied against an assigned activity included in this Act or the report accompanying this Act*.

Coastal Zone Management Act Administration

CSO requests ***\$12.4 million*** for Coastal Zone Management Act Administration under NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management (OCRM). OCRM provides support to the states and territories by providing program liaisons, processing grants and program changes, and leading the development of NOAA's Coastal Strategy. They also administer the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP), lead coral reef conservation activities, and manage the development of a National System of Marine Protected Areas. With all of these vested responsibilities, and to administer all of their programs adequately, OCRM needs this funding to be the best possible partners to the states and territories.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

CSO requests ***\$60 million*** for the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). Authorized by Congress in 2002, CELCP protects coastal and estuarine areas with significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical or aesthetic values. To date, Congress has appropriated over \$200 million for CELCP, allowing for the completion of over 100 conservation projects, with several dozen still in progress. CELCP projects in 26 of the nation's 35 coastal states have already helped preserve close to 35,000 acres of our coasts, and that total continues to grow as projects are completed. All federal funding has been leveraged by at least an equal amount of state, local, and private investments.

The preservation of coastal and estuarine areas is critical to both humans and the environment. These areas shield us from storms, protect us from the effects of sea-level rise, filter pollutants to maintain water quality, provide shelter, nesting and nursery grounds for fish and wildlife, protect rare and endangered species and provide access to beaches and waterfront areas. CELCP is the only program entirely dedicated to the conservation of these vital coastal areas.

Coral Reef Conservation

CSO requests ***\$33 million*** for NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, which provides funding to address the threats of fishing, land-based pollution and climate change through the Local Action Strategies (LAS), which are the state and territorial partnerships for protecting corals. The funding would also provide for deep coral communities and public awareness, as well as mapping and important satellite data to support alert systems for coral bleaching events and research on climatic conditions.

Coral reefs are perhaps the most amazing marine ecosystems on the planet. The biological diversity of coral reefs is astounding. Even though they make up less than one percent of the ocean floor, they provide habitat to over 25% of marine species. They also are important economic assets to the nation and local communities because they provide habitat for fisheries, protection from coastal storms, and support an active tourism industry.

The stewards of America's coral reef are comprised of two states: Hawai'i and Florida and the five territories of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. As members of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, these states and territories worked in partnership with federal agencies to develop the Local Action Strategies (LAS). The LAS initiative was specifically designed to help increase and link the goals and objectives of the U.S. National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs (2000) with locally driven priorities and actions. The LAS are locally-driven, short range roadmaps for collaborative and cooperative action among Federal, state, territory, and non-governmental partners. The LAS identify and implement priority projects to reduce key threats to valuable coral reef ecosystems in each region. These are examples of government integrated at the federal, state and local levels and they need additional resources for implementation.

CSO greatly appreciates the support the Subcommittee has provided in the past. Its support has assisted these programs in working together to protect our coasts and sustain our local communities. We hope you will take our requests into consideration as you move forward in the FY 2010 appropriations process.