

Promote healthy and safe ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes communities and economies

Coastal communities need to be able to anticipate risk, limit impact from extreme weather events, rapidly recover, and adapt to dramatically changing conditions. Proper investments can help protect coastal communities and grow their economies.

In the United States, more than 40 percent of the population lives in coastal counties, which generate almost half of U.S. gross domestic product. Unfortunately, millions reside in areas at risk for coastal flooding, putting homes, families, and critical economic resources in harm's way. Increasing coastal flooding and more intense coastal storms threaten the lives and safety of coastal residents, the integrity of public and private infrastructure, and key industries. [According to one study](#), if recent weather trends and the population growth of coastal counties continue, the damage caused by hurricanes and coastal storms could double every ten years, or faster. With so many people and valuable assets on the line, we must do more to help coastal communities prepare.

Make infrastructure investments that protect coastal communities

Any national infrastructure initiative should prioritize funding for projects that boost coastal resilience. This funding could be administered through a national infrastructure bank or other financing structure. In addition, new coastal infrastructure projects should build resilience into all aspects of design and engineering. This is critical for projects such as ports, roads, bridges, power grids, and wastewater treatment plants, among others. **The Trump Administration and Congress should prioritize financing for coastal resilience in any new national infrastructure initiative as a way to protect American communities, stimulate the economy, and create jobs.**

Provide support for states and coastal communities to upgrade critical coastal infrastructure

The population of coastal counties continues to grow alongside rapidly changing coastal conditions. Exacerbating these challenges, critical built infrastructure in coastal areas—including harbors and ports; roads, bridges, and tunnels; and wastewater treatment systems; among others—is outdated and overtaxed in many places. This poses significant risks to human health and safety, ecosystem health, and the economic vitality of coastal communities.

The Trump Administration and Congress should increase investment and support for critical coastal infrastructure so that coastal states and local communities can become more resilient to the impacts of coastal hazards, including extreme weather events, sea level rise, and other changes along the coast. The [Multihazard Mitigation Council](#) estimates that every dollar invested in mitigating the effects of storm surge on coastal communities saves the U.S. taxpayer four dollars in losses.

The deteriorated state of storm water and wastewater infrastructure is particularly pressing. In many places, it jeopardizes the safety of coastal communities' drinking water sources, local

economies, and coastal and marine ecosystem health. **The Trump Administration and Congress should invest in upgrades to potable and wastewater facilities and fully fund safe drinking water and wastewater treatment programs** under the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act.

Significantly increase investments in port infrastructure

American seaport activity accounts for [more than 25 percent](#) of the national economy. According to [NOAA](#), approximately 95 percent of the nation's international trade travels through U.S. seaports. This activity fuels the economic engine not only of coastal states, but also well into the heartland. To support economic growth, a series of infrastructure investments need to be made. In 2013, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave U.S. port infrastructure a [C rating](#), primarily because of poor connections to road and rail, and insufficient investment in dredging. These needs are particularly urgent in light of the recent Panama Canal expansion, which is changing patterns of global shipping and bringing larger vessels to East Coast ports. Our nation's large and small ports, particularly on the East Coast, will need dredging and additional infrastructure investments to remain viable and adequately support economic growth.

The Trump Administration and Congress should significantly increase investments in port infrastructure. Specifically, they should:

- Support the creation of a National Maritime Policy, coupled with the existing National Freight Policy, to fully realize the benefits of trade and the central role that American ports play in economic growth.
- Fully fund navigation safety efforts, including supporting maintenance of the [NOAA PORTS®](#) program.
- Fully fund navigation channel maintenance and development, including the beneficial use of dredged materials.
- Expand the capacity of U.S. ports to move cargo more efficiently by investing in infrastructure needed by larger vessels and in data and analysis on changing shipping patterns.
- Secure U.S. ports and waterside borders by providing U.S. Customs and Border Protection adequate staff to meet trade needs and the latest technology to ensure cargo is safe.
- Build port resilience and protect the environment by connecting ports to the electric grid, and helping them predict, plan, and adopt mitigation strategies for coastal erosion and sea level rise.

Boost funding and support for cost-effective restoration and protection of critical coastal features

Many natural features along the coastline provide important services for local communities. They serve to buffer against storm surges, purify water, provide habitat for important species, and offer recreational and tourism opportunities that are the foundation for many local economies. Such natural features include wetlands, dunes, mangroves, salt marshes, seagrass beds, and coral reefs. Protecting and restoring these areas are cost-effective ways to reduce the impacts of coastal hazards, such as storm surges, tsunamis, and coastal inundation exacerbated by sea level rise. The hands-on

work required during restoration projects also creates jobs and provides a significant return on investment for coastal economies. In fact, studies demonstrate that habitat restoration can produce economic benefits that are significantly greater than the initial dollars invested. [A 2012 study](#) found that NOAA's restoration projects created an average of 17 jobs, and as many as 33 jobs, for every \$1 million invested—a much higher rate of job creation than in other sectors. **The Trump Administration and Congress should restore critical natural features of America's coasts to support local economies and protect our communities from hazards.**

Federal programs with proven records of success in protecting and restoring these important natural coastal features need ongoing support. Specific programs that require continued investment include NOAA's [Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program](#), NOAA Restoration Center's [Community-based Restoration Program](#), the National Park Service's [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), the [U.S. Coral Reef Task Force](#), and the [National Estuary Program](#).

Restore critical ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico

A major experiment is underway to see whether, with extensive resources and coordination, decades of environmental degradation can be reversed in the Gulf of Mexico. Settlement funds and criminal and civil penalties related to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill are providing the region with unprecedented resources for restoration. With these resources, the Gulf Coast has a unique opportunity to build a more sustainable and resilient future. However, the challenges facing the region are immense and long-term. Success will require continued leadership and attention from federal, state, and local officials to ensure that restoration efforts are conducted in a coordinated manner, use science-based planning and assessment, and are completed in a timely manner.

The Trump Administration and Congress should support collaborative restoration efforts, such as the [Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council](#) and the [Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustee Council](#), to effectively and sustainably restore coastal economies and ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico.

Provide states and coastal communities with tools and information about risks

States and coastal communities need more accurate information about the true magnitude of coastal risks, better tools to address them, and stronger incentives for action to reduce those risks. **The Trump Administration and Congress should support state and coastal community efforts to understand and address coastal risks.** Specifically, they should:

- Update flood maps and other decision support tools so that risks to the coasts are more transparent to coastal communities and residents, elected officials, and the private sector.
- Support the development and implementation of state and local plans that increase resilience. Recovery plans should assess the efficacy of rebuilding both natural and built structures, account for sea level rise and changing coastal landscapes, and update zoning laws and building codes.
- Reform the [National Flood Insurance Program](#) to better account for increasing flood risks, reduce incentives for building in flood-prone areas, and reduce repeat claims, while respecting homeowner investment and the cultural heritage of coastal communities.

- Provide incentives for action to reduce risks, such as building/rebuilding with appropriate setbacks, adopting resilient building codes, and/or implementing safeguards to withstand future storms. These actions may include choosing to not build/rebuild in areas identified as extremely vulnerable and providing appropriate support for displaced residents.