

# Maintaining A Vital American Resource: Coastal Zone Management



**Coastal zone management balances development and protection of the unparalleled natural resources that support coastal communities and economies. Planning for an uncertain future, coastal management helps protect lives and investments on the coast.**

*“The Congress finds that there is a national interest in the effective management, beneficial use, protection, and development of the coastal zone.”*

- Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. 16 U.S.C. § 1451 (a)

The Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM Program) is a partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and coastal states and territories. The State CZM Programs take the lead in managing coastal resources using their expertise, firsthand experience, and close working relationships with local communities to:

- Provide planning, financial, and technical assistance
- Protect natural resources
- Manage development in high hazard areas
- Ensure coastal-dependent uses receive development priority
- Coordinate state and federal actions to create permit and regulatory efficiencies

Leveraging federal support and funding through a state-match requirement, the State, Territory, and NOAA CZM Programs depend on one another to seamlessly deliver the services and resources needed to comprehensively and proactively manage our shared coastal areas. For over 50 years, CZM has been a voluntary partnership and a successful implementation of cooperative federalism.

Since 1970, the population of coastal counties has grown by over 40 million people, an increase of 46%.

Coastal land cover changes twice as fast as the rest of the nation – between 1996 and 2016, an area larger than Nebraska experienced land use change.

While the coastal counties of the U.S. accounts for less than 10% of U.S. land area, they are home to more than 40% of the population – 129 million people.

Coastal Communities are national economic drivers, employing almost 55 million people and generating \$10 trillion toward the nation's GDP.



## Coastal Zone Management

Spanning nearly 222,000 miles of the American landscape, the U.S. coastal zone consists of the Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf coasts as well as the Great Lakes and island coasts. As coastal populations continue to grow and the national demands for energy, seafood, foreign trade, and real estate increase, we rely more and more on the vital resources of our coastal areas.

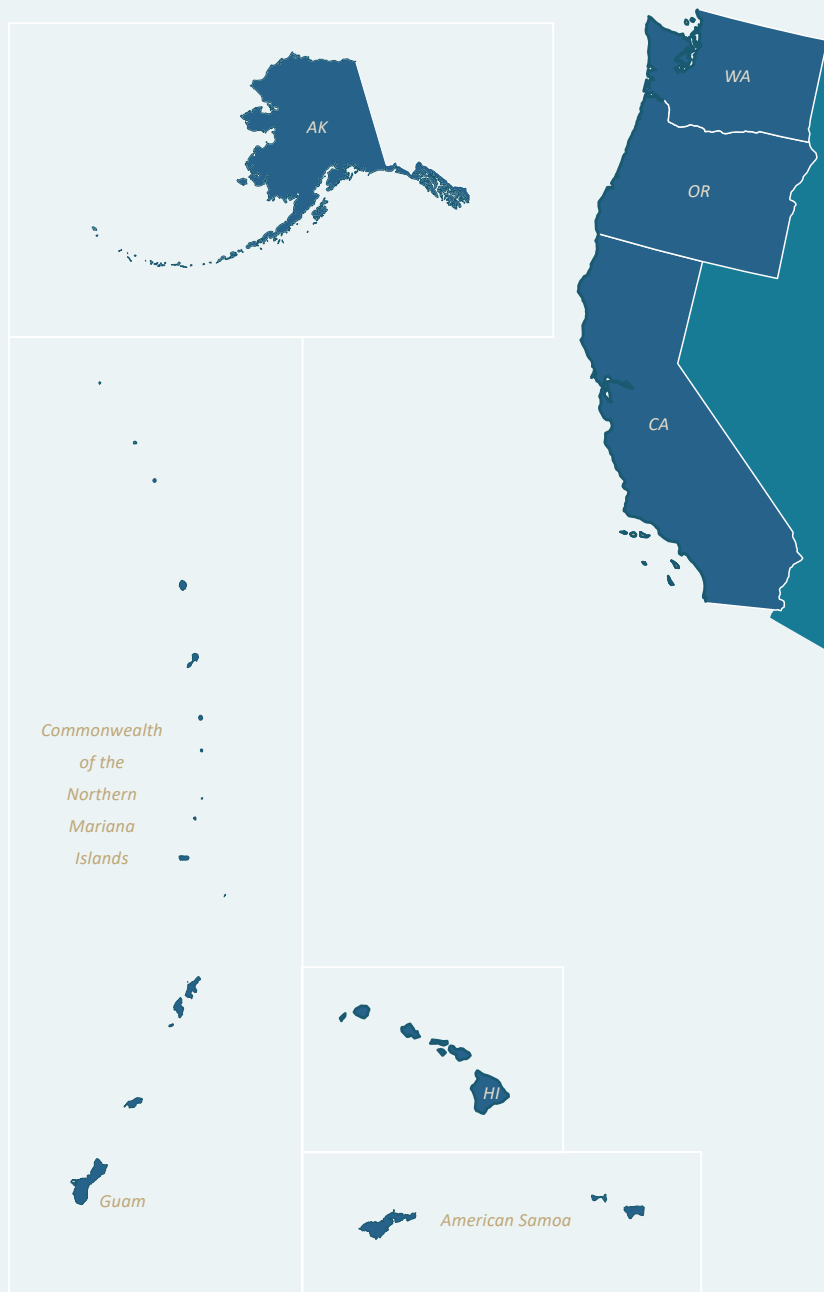
Coastal zone management is the preservation, maintenance, and development of these vital resources and coordinates and balances the needs of diverse stakeholders. From shipping lanes and ports, to bike lanes and parks, our coasts provide resources for a vast range of competing interests vital to our way of life. Continued collaboration and strategic planning helps ensure that our coasts keep pace with these demands.

By maintaining our coasts through a long-term, strategic approach — and collaborating between local, state and federal agencies — coastal zone management facilitates sustainable growth and development, and plans for an uncertain future helping protect lives and investments on the coast.

# Coastal Management: Str

## COASTAL HAZARDS

The coastal zone combines dense development and critical infrastructure in an area prone to flooding and exposed to severe weather. Hurricanes, king tides, tsunamis, erosion, and storm surge can all damage coastal infrastructure, impede commerce, and take lives. CZM Programs provide funding, technical assistance, planning, and implementation support for coastal communities to reduce disaster impacts, saving lives and money and defending a robust national economy from evolving coastal hazards.



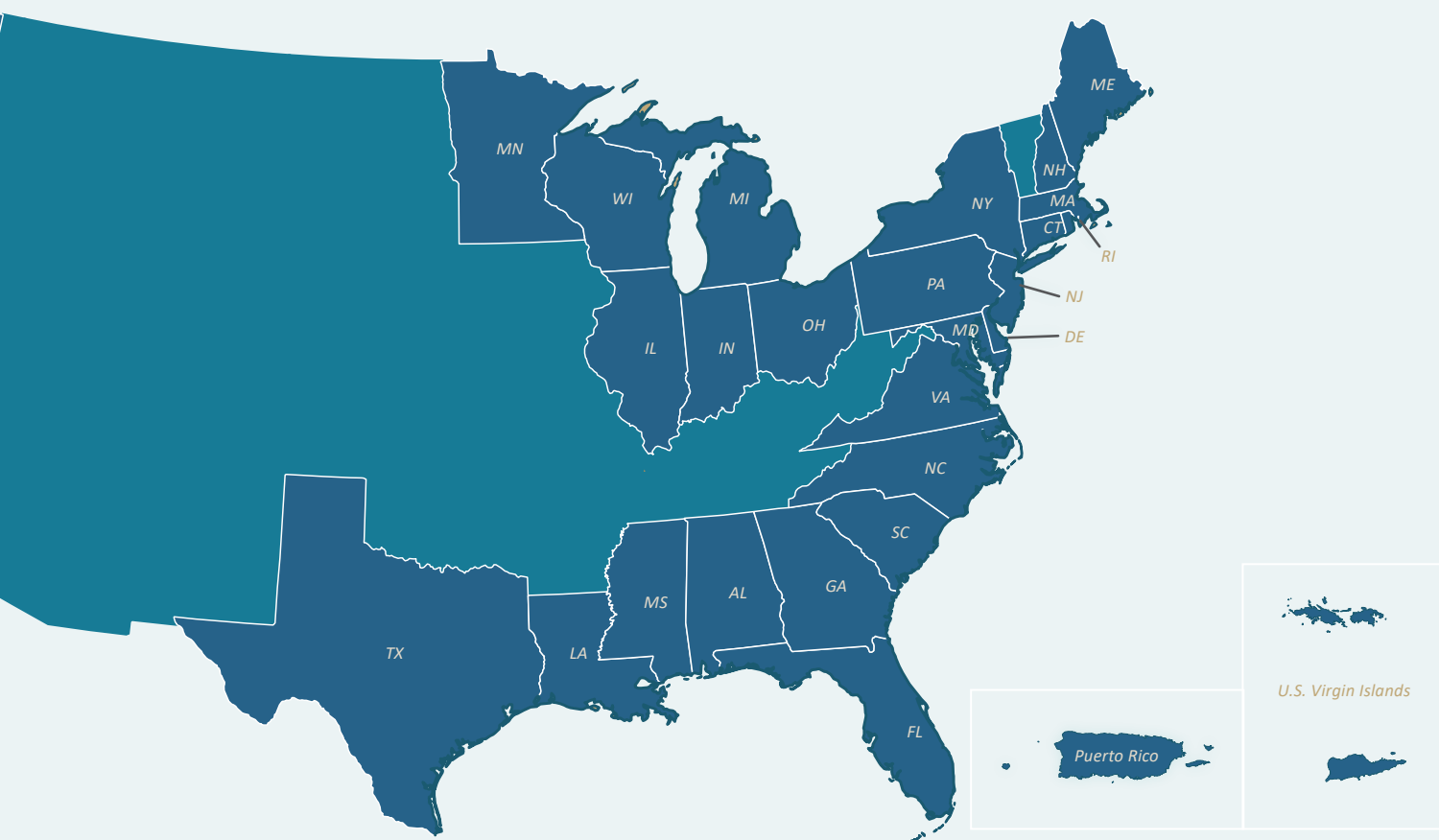
# Strengthening and Protecting Coastal Communities

## LIVING RESOURCES

CZM Programs manage the vital living resources that sustain our coastal economies through ecosystem conservation and management with prudent coastal development – ranging from working with industry to plan and site innovative aquaculture projects, to protecting the estuarine habitats that sustain offshore fisheries, to conserving the coral reefs and beaches that drive coastal tourism.

## COASTAL ECONOMIES

State and Territory CZM Programs provide funding, planning support, technical assistance, and critical interagency coordination services for coastal communities to improve public access, restore natural coastal systems, and plan for multiple use of coastal resources. In each state and territory, these programs balance consumptive use with conservation to improve quality of life and economic vitality.



States match federal funds for coastal zone management dollar-for-dollar.

In 2023, the US experienced a record of 28 “billion-dollar weather events”, costing a total of \$92.9 billion.

Annual savings due to mitigation programs’ more stringent building code requirements totals roughly \$3.4 billion each year.

The marine economy’s contribution to the GDP increased by 7.4%, compared to the national economy’s growth rate of 5.9%

Sources:





## Coastal Hazards



## Coastal Restoration



## Coastal Economies

**Repurposing dredged materials to strengthen evacuation route resistance.**

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, along with the Mobile County Commission and Mobile Bay Natural Estuary Program, are responding to environmental and transportation needs through the Dauphin Island Causeway Shoreline Restoration Project.

Phase 1 of the project, completed in September of 2024, involved the construction of breakwaters protecting 3.5 miles of the Causeway. During Phase 2, the project has partnered with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to deposit dredged materials between the breakwaters and the causeway to establish a marsh platform.

This marsh platform will not only protect the Causeway, Dauphin Island's only evacuation route, from storm waves, but will also shield almost 300 acres of salt marsh habitat to the west of the road. This project was made possible through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund.

**Collaboration in developing science-based planning tools for aquaculture.**

In July of 2025, the Washington State Department of Ecology will begin a project to restore and protect Graveyard Spit, located in Willapa Bay on Washington's southwestern coast.

This project is funded by grants from NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, FEMA's Building Infrastructure and Communities program, and NFWF's National Coastal Resilience Fund and is in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Protecting this back-barrier estuary will also protect intertidal environments and their species, the Shoalwater Tribe community, and State Route 105. The Department of Ecology has used their Coastal Monitoring and Analysis program to track and respond to erosion along the shores of the Columbia River, the Puget Sound, and the Pacific Ocean.

**Communities Assess, and Expand, Working Waterfront Economy**

Maine Coastal Management, working with NOAA, Maine Sea Grant, local communities and other partners, has been at the forefront of analyzing the economic benefits of working waterfronts. Local officials are now working to maximize the waterfront economy, utilizing new data to help recruit new businesses, improve comprehensive plans, and apply for grants to enhance infrastructure and economic development.

Spurring on this analysis was the Town of Milbridge, which sought to justify spending to address rapid sedimentation that had resulted in the a public pier and boat launch becoming largely unusable. The research conducted revealed that the "living resources" and "ship and boat building" economic sectors were greatly affected by the closure of the pier. The study also uncovered the closure's potential economic impacts on other local marine industries. Economic analysis workshops were also held with leaders of several other coastal towns and cities in Maine.

## The Coastal States Organization

The Coastal States Organization (CSO) is a nonprofit organization that represents the Governors of the nation's coastal states and territories. CSO works closely with governor-appointed delegates, most often the head of the coastal zone management programs in each of the coastal states, to support their work to maintain the health and vitality of our coasts.



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