

CSO supports National Ocean and Coastal Security Improvements Act to promote investment in coastal resilience

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The National Ocean and Coastal Security Improvement Act builds upon NOAA and the U.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Foundation's existing coastal resilience efforts to enable coastal states and communities to better prepare for and respond to coastal hazards.

Coastal States Organization thanks Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) and Resident Commissioner Gonzalez-Colon (R-PR) for their efforts to reintroduce the National Ocean and Coastal Security Fund Improvements Act. The bill updates the existing National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF), to better clarify the eligible uses of the funds and to ensure that coastal States, territories (including the District of Columbia), coastal Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations have equitable access to additional block and competitive grants that may be provided through the fund.

As coastal communities face increasing coastal hazards such as extreme weather events, sea level rise, sediment erosion and changing ocean conditions, access to funds to prepare for and respond to these events is crucial. Under the update eligible uses included in the bill, NOCS grants may be used for:

- The maintenance, restoration and protection of oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes resources, including habitats and ecosystems that provide blue carbon benefits;
- Increased spatial mapping and data-sharing;
- Design and implementation of climate resilient nature-based solutions / infrastructure;
- Actions to help fisheries, and other marine based commercial, recreational and tourism minimize and adapt to coastal changes;
- Protect, modify or relocate public infrastructure likely to be impacted by coastal hazards;
- Improve the planning and management of coastal development;
- Facilitate stronger interstate and regional efforts to address coastal challenges;
- Acquisition of property to support resilience efforts; and other activities to build coastal resilience to coastal hazards.

"Coastal communities are facing numerous costly challenges due increasing coastal hazards that threaten the infrastructure, livelihoods, and ecosystems they rely upon. The updates made under the National Ocean and Coastal Security Improvements Act, allow Coastal States, territories and tribes to more effectively and holistically access and utilize funds to help plan for, mitigate the impacts of and respond to coastal hazards. This includes extreme weather events such as hurricanes and typhoons, but also long-term coastal changes." said Derek Brockbank, Executive Director of Coastal States Organization. "These challenges extend far beyond any single state's border, so the bill also encourages interstate collaboration address these issues through entities such as the Regional Ocean Partnerships."