

# A STRONG MARINE AND COASTAL ECONOMY

The marine and coastal economy contributes more than \$432 billion to the U.S. GDP. The sector supports millions of jobs, drives innovation and sustains quality of life in coastal communities. However, international competition, economic downturns, port closures, weather disasters and diminishing federal support threatens the sector and its contribution to a strong economy. Significant investment is needed now.

The Marine and Coastal Economy Partners are a coalition of stewardship and management organizations that work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).



**As caretakers of the marine and coastal economy, including the Great Lakes, we urge the Trump Administration, Congress, and state leadership to join us in ensuring the long-term vitality of this critical sector.**

## HOW DO WE SECURE A STRONG MARINE AND COASTAL ECONOMY?

America's coastal and marine economies are strong and dynamic, but their future depends on decisive action today. We call on the Trump Administration, Congress, and state leadership to...

- Bolster federal and state support for programs at the state level, in NOAA, and relevant infrastructure to enhance coastal resilience, economic stability, and scientific innovation.
- Prioritize resilience through policies that balance sustainable development, economic growth, good jobs, and environmental stewardship and ensure long-term benefits for coastal communities and a stronger GDP.
- Strengthen partnerships with marine and coastal economy partners to advance initiatives that safeguard the U.S. economy for generations to come.

**Marine and coastal economy partners** work closely with NOAA's National Ocean Service and NOAA research to deliver science-based solutions, data, and tools to help manage and protect coastal and marine resources, enabling sustainable economic growth while ensuring resilience to environmental threats.

- **Coastal States Organization** advocates for 34 state and territorial coastal zone management programs that strengthen coastal resilience and support sustainable economic development.
- **National Estuarine Research Reserve Association** advances the work of 30 Reserves as they manage nearly 1.4M acres of public lands and waters, create jobs, contribute to revenues, and support industries.
- **National Marine Sanctuary Foundation** protects and promotes the sustainable use of marine sanctuaries that provide critical habitat, support biodiversity, and drive local tourism and education.
- **Sea Grant Association** strengthens local economies by supporting sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal businesses while enhancing community resilience to catastrophic weather.
- **Integrated Ocean Observing System Association** provides publicly accessible data to help monitor, understand, predict, and plan for events that impact coastal infrastructure and people.
- **Marine Debris Foundation** safeguards coastal economies by removing, reducing, and preventing marine debris; protecting critical habitats; and reducing costs for coastal industries.
- **Restore America's Estuaries** protects and restores bays and estuaries as essential resources for the U.S.



# WHY WE NEED A STRONG MARINE AND COASTAL ECONOMY

## TO POWER AMERICA'S GROWTH

- Coastal and ocean industries contribute nearly 2% of GDP (BEA, 2022), including sectors like tourism, recreation, and ship and boat building, which support more than 2.4 million jobs.
- Annually, coastal counties produce \$10 trillion in goods and services, employ 54.6 million people, and pay \$4 trillion in wages (BEA, 2020).
- Transportation and warehousing (including ports) enable 90% of U.S. trade and connect U.S. businesses to global markets (NOAA, 2021). Port and maritime industries support more than one in eight jobs in the U.S. workforce (AAPA, 2024).
- Marine Protected Areas, National Marine Sanctuaries, and National Estuarine Research Reserves protect ecosystems; preserve corals, oyster reefs, and wetlands; mitigate economic damage from disasters (saving billions annually); and support fisheries and tourism.

## TO COUNTERACT THE THREATS TO ECONOMIC STABILITY

- In 2024, there were 27 confirmed weather/climate disaster events in the U.S., each with losses exceeding \$1 billion (NOAA, 2024).
- Disastrous weather events have increased in frequency and intensity, jeopardizing coastal infrastructure and disrupting livelihoods. Unmitigated weather-related risks cost billions in damages annually (NOAA, 2021).
- Reduced congressional support for coastal programs threatens the ability to adapt to these challenges. Every dollar invested in resilience yields a \$6 return (NIBS 2019).
- Marine debris creates navigation hazards, increased operational costs, and lost fishing revenue.

## TO ENSURE RESILIENCE TO ECONOMIC THREATS

- Support marine economy ocean and coast partners as they respond to weather events; safeguard livelihoods with data and information; provide technical assistance and funding to governments and businesses; support aquaculture and fisheries; and prepare a skilled workforce for maritime and coastal industry.
- Invest in research, education, and ocean and coastal observing systems that amplify resilience, advance innovation, and support the next generation of marine professionals.



## References

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