

2021 Federal Policy Messaging for CSO members



The Biden Administration and the 117th Congress are eager to address climate change, resilience, offshore wind power, land and water conservation, and equity and racial justice. These are all issues that deeply affect coastal states, and state coastal zone management programs play a huge role in all of these issues.

With so many different topics and policies to weigh in on, we can easily lose sight of our top priorities. It is also easy to forget that allies in the Administration and Congress – even people we know well – do not fully understand the role of coastal zone management programs in many of these areas (or at least not as well as we do).

As you have conversations with federal officials – within the Administration or Congress – we encourage you to use the following messaging framework. Feel free to tailor to fit your needs, but remember:

- Be proactive – ask questions, make your asks, follow up;
- Hit *your* talking points and priorities;
- Keep it simple (stupid)

Messaging Framework:

- 1) **Explain your Coastal Zone Management program.** What do you do? How are you already achieving the Administration/Congress' priorities? How are you working with other programs/entities (Sea Grant, NERRs, local governments, etc.) to advance these priorities. Tell a story with a punchline: give specific examples with tangible outcomes.
- 2) **Big challenges need big solutions.** Coastlines and coastal communities are facing unprecedented crises. Coasts need a major (\$10 billion) investment in infrastructure. Every federal and state agency that works on the coast needs to focus on resilience and adaptation. Coastal communities need to plan for short and long-term climate impacts.
- 3) **Congress/Administration should invest in existing coastal resources and programs.** No need to reinvent the wheel, we already have programs that can do, and are doing, much of what needs to be done on resilience, conservation, etc; but not at the scale necessary. We need more capacity.
- 4) **Make your specific ask(s).** This can be tailored, but should be no more than 2 or 3 asks. CSO recommends the following:
 - a. **Fund Coastal Zone Management - \$88.5 million for CZ Grants, \$50.45 million for CZ Management and Service** (NOAA OCM budget). State coastal zone management programs are the foundation of coastal resilience, conservation, offshore energy, and climate adaptation; CZM programs' capacity must keep pace with scale of work.
 - b. **Re-authorize the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)** – the CZMA has not been authorized since 1999. A new authorization would re-focus the Act on climate change adaptation and resilience in the coastal zone, while making environmental justice a decision driver in every coastal program.

This framework can and should be used at **congressional meetings, meetings/webinars with agency** (NOAA, FEMA, USACE, etc.) officials, in **public forums, comment periods**, and anywhere federal decision-makers might be listening. *We have a huge opportunity over the next two years; let's keep focused and get some big wins!*