

Updated: 2021 Federal Policy Messaging for Coastal States Organization 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. State coastal zone management programs play a huge role in implementing these.

As you have conversations with federal officials – within the Administration or Congress – we encourage you to use the following messaging framework. Remember:

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

Messaging Framework:

- 1) **Explain CSO and *your* Coastal Zone Management program.** What do you do? How are you already achieving the Administration/Congress' priorities? How are you working with other 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; states need flexibility to direct coastal infrastructure and resilience funding.
- 3) **Invest in existing coastal resources and programs.** No need to reinvent the wheel, existing programs can do, and are doing, much of what needs to be done on resilience and conservation; 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 Infrastructure and Resilience:**
 - i. **Infrastructure legislation** includes billions of dollars in restoration funding, including funds directly to state programs and funds for which states are eligible.
 - ii. **Annual appropriations** provide essential capacity for state coastal zone management programs to do coastal restoration and infrastructure projects. Appropriations should be increased to match historical levels and to keep pace with the scale of work.
 - b. **Re-authorize the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA),** which 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.
 - c. **Federal Consistency** is the cornerstone of the partnership between federal and state coordination in coastal management; it should not be weakened or undermined no matter how well-intentioned the purpose.

This framework can and should be used at **congressional meetings, meetings/webinars with agency** officials, in **public forums, comment periods**, and anywhere federal decision-makers might be listening; the specific asks are tailored for congress and NOAA.

We have a huge opportunity over the next two years; let's keep focused and get some big wins!