



COASTAL STATES ORGANIZATION

50 F Street, NW, Suite 570, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 800-0580 - www.coastalstates.org



June 14, 2022



The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman,



The Coastal States Organization (CSO), representing the nation's coastal States, Territories, and Commonwealths on policy issues relating to ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resource management, is **pleased to support H.R. 7801, the Resilient Coasts and Estuaries Act** to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act and establish a Coastal and Estuarine Resilience and Restoration Program.



This legislation will reinvigorate the Coastal and Estuarine Lands Conservation Program (CELCP), a popular tool for coastal zone management, by amending it to create the Coastal and Estuarine Resilience and Restoration Program (CERRP). This program provides vital funding for coastal acquisitions, a tool that States and Territories utilize to promote restoration and resilience along their coastlines. Through CELCP funded coastal acquisitions, more than 110,000 acres of coastal and estuarine land were protected between 2002 and 2017. However, appropriations and other federal funding sources for this program ceased in 2017. This bill revitalizes funding authorization for this important program.



In addition to the revitalization of this coastal acquisition program, the Resilient Coasts and Estuaries Act modernizes the program by creating a new tool in the coastal zone management toolkit by authorizing the acquisition of developed land and restoration of that land to a natural state. This new tool is a win-win, assisting coastal property owners whose properties are threatened by coastal hazards while also restoring critical coastal habitat to promote strategic adaptation and mitigation.



Finally, this bill will strengthen the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) by directing the Secretary of Commerce to designate at least five new reserves and ensuring biogeographical representation. The bill will enhance the ability of the NERRS to conduct collaborative research, serve as sentinel sites, and engage the public with our nation's coastal resources. In addition, the bill increases the authorized appropriations to be commensurate with program needs. The NERRS protects and preserves estuarine and coastal land, while also providing timely and relevant data to support conservation and management efforts in coastal States and Territories.



CSO is pleased to support H.R. 7801 and applauds the bipartisan support for the legislation. This bill enhances the ability of coastal States and Territories to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the nation's coastal zone.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support and for your leadership in this important area. For any questions, please contact Rachel Keylon, CSO Federal Affairs Director, at (202) 800-0747 or rkeylon@coastalstates.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Derek Brockbank".

Derek Brockbank
Executive Director