

The Coastal Zone Management Act

*Ensuring the conservation and responsible use
of our nation's coastal and ocean resources*

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) is the federal government's primary tool for fostering comprehensive management of our nation's coastal resources. The main objective of the CZMA is to "preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, to restore or enhance the resources of the nation's coastal zone." It outlines two national programs, the National Coastal Zone Management Program and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. As a voluntary partnership between the federal government and U.S. coastal states and territories, the CZMA leverages federal and state matching funds and gives states the flexibility to design coastal programs that accommodate their unique challenges and legal frameworks.

For over 30 years, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management has administered the Act at the federal level, providing national leadership, strategic direction, guidance, and evaluation to state and territory coastal programs and estuarine research reserves. It works with state partners to balance the often competing and conflicting demands of coastal resource use, economic development, and conservation.

The National Coastal Zone Management Program

The National Coastal Zone Management Program offers coastal states two incentives to develop approved coastal management plans: grants for program development and implementation and federal consistency authority. Since the inception of the CZMA, 34 of 35 eligible states and territories have established approved coastal management programs that address a wide range of issues such as coastal development, water quality, shoreline erosion, public access, protection of natural resources, location of energy facilities, and preparations for coastal hazards like hurricanes and floods. Individual coastal programs are also working jointly on regional efforts to address common concerns.

Federal Consistency

The federal consistency provision of the CZMA requires federal agency activities that have foreseeable effects on coastal uses and resources to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with enforceable policies of state coastal management programs approved by NOAA. Activities by non-federal applicants for federal authorizations and funding must be fully consistent with these policies.

Coastal Zone Enhancement Program

The Coastal Zone Enhancement Program was incorporated in the CZMA in 1990, and encourages states and territories to enhance their programs within nine key areas of national significance: wetlands, coastal hazards, public access, marine debris, cumulative and secondary impacts, special area management plans, ocean/Great Lakes resources, energy and government facility siting, and aquaculture. Every five years, states and territories assess needs associated with these areas and develop strategies to address them.

Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program

The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management works with the Environmental Protection Agency to administer the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program to ensure that coastal states have the necessary tools to prevent and control polluted runoff. The program, which focuses on pollution prevention, strengthens links between federal and state water quality programs. It requires states to implement management measures, consisting of a set of tools, to address polluted runoff from a variety of sources. These measures are backed by enforceable state policies and actions—state authorities that will ensure implementation of the program.

National Estuarine Research Reserve System

Established by the CZMA, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System is a network of 27 areas representing different biogeographic regions of the United States that are protected for long-term research, water-quality monitoring, education, and coastal stewardship. The system is a partnership between NOAA and the coastal states in which NOAA provides funding, national guidance, and technical assistance. Each reserve is managed on a daily basis by a lead state agency or university, with input from local partners.

Reserve staff work with local communities and regional groups to address natural resource management issues, such as water quality, habitat restoration, and invasive species. Through integrated research and education, the reserves help communities develop strategies to deal successfully with these coastal resource issues. Reserves provide training on estuarine issues of concern in their local communities, offer field classes for K-12 students, and support teachers through professional development programs in marine education. Reserves also provide long-term water quality monitoring and opportunities for scientists and graduate students to conduct research in a "living laboratory."

The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) was established in 2002 to protect coastal and estuarine lands considered important for their ecological, conservation, recreational, historical, or aesthetic values. The program provides state and local governments with matching funds to purchase significant coastal and estuarine lands, or conservation easements on such lands, from willing sellers.

For more information

Visit our website at: **www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov** or contact us at:

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