

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2021

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, House Speaker Pelosi and House Minority Leader McCarthy:

As President Biden outlined in his plan to Build Back Better, coastal restoration will be a key part of a new infrastructure economy with projects that will improve community resilience, provide opportunities for job growth, and increase economic vitality all over the country as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. When Congress considers economic stimulus and infrastructure legislation and identifies investments to be made to support businesses and communities in this extraordinarily difficult time, **we urge you to include \$10 billion for ocean, Great Lakes, and coastal habitat restoration and resilience projects that would provide multiple benefits:**

***Restoration projects create jobs that directly stimulate the economy.***

They require many types of labor from construction workers and scientists, to planners and engineers. A [2017 analysis](#) by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) found that stimulus-supported coastal restoration projects created over 2,200 jobs - around 15 jobs per million dollars invested. Restoration can also help put fishermen to work through efforts like NOAA's Marine Debris Program or Cooperative Research program, which pay fishermen to retrieve ghost gear or work with scientists to conduct critical research.

***Restoration projects protect coastal communities.***

As the nation emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, coastal community economies will continue to face the immediate threats of sea level rise and more frequent extreme weather events. [The 2020 hurricane season](#) produced a record 30 named storms, of which 13 became hurricanes (the second-highest number of hurricanes on record). This record storm season punished the lives and livelihoods of coastal communities already reeling from COVID-19. Investing in restoration projects and improved natural infrastructure saves lives now and saves

money down the line. One [study](#) found that during Hurricane Sandy, natural coastal wetlands prevented more than \$625 million in damages by reducing flooding, an example that we should repeat across America's coasts.

***Restoration projects mitigate climate change and improve fisheries.***

Some of the Great Lakes and coastal ecosystems that can provide jobs and storm protection - salt marshes, seagrass beds, mangroves, and wetlands - also remove up to four times more carbon from the atmosphere per acre than land-based ecosystems. These and other ocean and coastal habitats like kelp forests and coral reefs serve as critical nursery grounds for many commercially important species, including salmon, striped bass, lobster, shrimp, and crabs. Investing in restoration has the potential to benefit fish stocks and create future fisheries jobs.

Importantly, many of these projects are ready to start now. In a 2021 analysis, Coastal States Organization examined 18 of the 34 coastal states and identified \$6.08 billion in projects that could be done right now if they had funding.

By investing in coastal restoration, Congress can help coastal communities and states recover from the economic devastation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as reduce their need for future federal disaster expenditures from storms and fisheries failures. And most importantly, coastal restoration can immediately create jobs for the many hard-working people in America struggling to save their businesses and ways of life.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signed,

Alabama Coastal Foundation  
American Littoral Society  
Azul  
Blue Frontier  
California League of Conservation Voters  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
Center for American Progress  
Center for the Blue Economy  
Cetacean Society International  
Clean, Healthy, Educated, Safe & Sustainable Community, Inc.  
Coastal States Organization  
Colorado Ocean Coalition  
Conservation Alabama  
Conservation Law Foundation  
Conservation Voters of South Carolina  
Consortium for Ocean Leadership  
Defensores de la Cuenca

Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids  
EarthEcho International  
Earthjustice  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Environment Georgia  
Environment Maine  
Environment Massachusetts  
Environment New Jersey  
Environment Texas  
Environment Virginia  
Environment Washington  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Environmental League of MA  
Florida Bay Forever Save Our Waters  
Friends of the Mariana Trench Monument  
Georgia Conservation Voters  
Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS)  
GreenLatinos  
Gullah/Geechee Fishing Association  
Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition  
Healthy Gulf  
Healthy Ocean Coalition  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC  
Inland Ocean Coalition  
Inland Ocean Coalition Alaska Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Arizona Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Buffalo, NY Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Central Texas Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition CSU Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition CU Boulder Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Great Lakes Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Illinois Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Montana Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition North Texas Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition University of Michigan Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Utah Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Washington, DC Chapter  
Inland Ocean Coalition Wyoming Chapter  
IntelliReefs  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute  
League of Conservation Voters

Maine Conservation Alliance  
Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network  
Marine Conservation Institute  
Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket  
Michigan League of Conservation Voters  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Monterey Bay Aquarium  
National Aquarium  
National Audubon Society  
National Ocean Protection Coalition  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
New England Aquarium  
New Mexico Wildlife Federation  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
NY4WHALES  
Ocean Conservancy  
Ocean Conservation Research  
Ocean Defense Initiative  
Ocean River Institute  
Oceana  
Oceanic Preservation Society  
Onondaga Audubon  
Patagonia  
Project O  
Reef Life Foundation  
Reef Life Restoration Nanoscience  
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes  
Rescue a Reef program  
Sachamama  
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation  
Save Our Shores  
Seattle Aquarium  
Seven Circles Foundation  
Shedd Aquarium  
ShoreLock  
Sierra Club  
Surfrider Foundation  
TAO  
The Blue Mind Network  
The FREED Peoples  
The Ocean Foundation  
The Ocean Project  
The Rewilding Institute

Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center  
Virginia League of Conservation Voters  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation  
Whale Week  
WILDCOAST  
Wildlands Network  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation