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](https://www.noaa.gov/) 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](https://www.noaa.gov/) 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