

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 1, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

We respectfully request that you work with the Natural Resources and Science, Space, and Technology Committees to provide no less than \$10 billion for coastal restoration and resilience projects and robust funding to scale up the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) ocean observations efforts in the Build Back Better Plan. We are encouraged that President Biden's American Jobs Plan outlines the importance of protecting and restoring coastal ecosystems. These investments will reinvigorate our coastal communities, protect and restore critical ecosystems, and create thousands of high-quality, good-paying jobs.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), coastal communities contribute at least \$7.6 trillion to the U.S. economy annually. Unfortunately, many of our coastal communities are struggling to recover as the coronavirus pandemic persists. Investing in our coastal communities through restoration and resilience projects has proven to be an effective driver of rapid economic growth. In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation with \$167 million to restore coastal habitats. NOAA quickly executed a competitive solicitation and selection process for the ARRA funds and received approximately \$3 billion in eligible proposals. According to a May 2017 NOAA Technical Memorandum, the ARRA funding supported 125 restoration projects, restored more than 25,584 acres of coastal habitat, improved 677 miles of streams of fish habitat, removed more than 433,397 tons of debris from coastal habitats, supported thousands of good-paying jobs, and provided economic benefits to coastal communities.

More than a decade later, we have the opportunity to build on this successful model and respond to the demand for coastal restoration and resilience projects that has increased as a result of climate change. By providing \$10 billion for coastal restoration projects, we will strengthen natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities from the escalating climate crisis, which is contributing to sea level rise, coastal storms, and flooding. This investment will help safeguard biodiversity and maintain healthy fisheries and wildlife populations through habitat restoration and species protection and recovery. Coastal restoration projects can also restore blue carbon ecosystems, including mangroves, tidal marshes, seagrasses, and kelp forests. According to the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, the protection and restoration of these

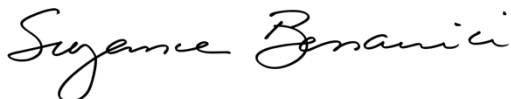
coastal blue carbon ecosystems could prevent approximately one gigaton of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere by 2050, making it a key natural climate solution. Coastal restoration projects can also help remove marine debris, improve water quality, and prevent the collapse of the natural systems that stabilize our climate.

Importantly, these funds could be used to support existing programs, such as the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, Coastal Resilience Grants, Coastal Zone Management Grants, and the Coral Reef Conservation Program. Many of these programs directly pass funds to local governments, universities, and non-governmental organizations to carry out projects that benefit coastal communities. In distributing the funds, Congress should also direct NOAA to balance investments in shovel-ready, mid-term, and long-term projects with an emphasis on job creation potential, and applicant and geographic diversity.

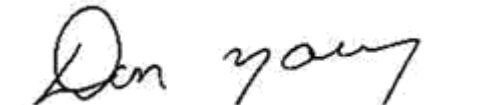
Robust funding to strengthen ocean data and monitoring will also help our communities become more resilient. Coastal communities, including fishers, rely on accurate ocean data and monitoring for information on ocean acidification, forecasting of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, tsunami preparedness, navigation, and port security. As we recognize the inaugural year of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, we have the opportunity to leverage existing monitoring and research efforts from the National Sea Grant College Program, NOAA Cooperative Institutes, and the eleven Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) regional coastal observing networks, which deliver accurate and continuous data on our ocean and coasts.

By providing no less than \$10 billion for coastal restoration and resilience projects and robust funding for ocean data and monitoring in any final reconciliation package, we can protect our coastal communities and ecosystems, support good-paying jobs, and provide a pathway to build back better. We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to continuing to work with you to support our blue economy.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Don Young  
Member of Congress

## ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES

Barbara Lee  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Jared Huffman  
Alan Lowenthal  
Peter A. DeFazio  
Chris Pappas  
Marilyn Strickland  
Jimmy Panetta  
Jerrold Nadler  
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Adam Smith  
Kathy Castor  
Debbie Dingell  
Mark DeSaulnier  
Jamie Raskin  
James R. Langevin  
Scott H. Peters  
Chellie Pingree  
Rick Larsen  
David N. Cicilline  
Sara Jacobs  
Mike Levin  
Charlie Crist  
Pramila Jayapal  
Julia Brownley  
Peter Welch  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
John P. Sarbanes  
Deborah K. Ross  
Sean Casten  
A. Donald McEachin  
Doris Matsui  
Katie Porter  
Kathleen M. Rice