UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE Suzanne BONAMICI 1st District of Oregon

Coastal Restoration Act of 2026

SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY

Section 1. Short Title.

Section 2. Definitions.

Provides definitions for the following terms: "appropriate congressional committees"; "coastal blue carbon ecosystem"; "Digital Coast"; "Indian Tribe"; "Interagency Working Group"; "regional coastal observing system"; "restoration"; "State"; "Subcommittee"; "Undersecretary".

Section 3. Interagency Working Group on Coastal Blue Carbon.

Establishes an Interagency Working Group (IWG), chaired by the Director of NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, to:

- Develop and maintain the national map and inventory on coastal blue carbon ecosystems, establish protection and restoration practices, examine existing legal authorities for protection and restoration, assess the effects of stressors on carbon sequestration, and coordinate federal data collection, monitoring, and standards for coastal blue carbon ecosystems research and restoration;
- Consist of senior representatives from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States Geological Survey (USGS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Smithsonian Institution, Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of State, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and Council on Environmental Quality;
- Submit reports to Congress of a summary, strategic plan, and timeline to monitor and protect the coastal blue carbon ecosystems through research, practices, and assessments for the 5-year fiscal period; and
- Publish the strategic plan in the Federal Register for public comments for a minimum of 60 days.

Section 4. National Map and Inventory of Coastal Blue Carbon Ecosystems.

Directs the IWG to create and manage a national map and inventory of coastal blue carbon ecosystems to:

- Maintain regionally specific information about coastal blue carbon ecosystems, including ecological properties and conservation status;
- Curate existing and acquired data from the federal, state, Tribal, and local agencies to assess carbon sequestration capacities and condition measurements of coastal blue carbon ecosystems;
- Evaluate data to develop regional assessments and provide technical assistance to State, Tribal, and local officials to protect and restore coastal blue carbon ecosystems;
- Use scenario modeling to manage, protect, and restore degrading coastal blue carbon ecosystems and forecast carbon sequestration rates affected by environmental or human stressors; and

- Examine the potential of developing a coastal blue carbon calculator to assess the effect of restoration activities on sequestration rates.

Section 5. Restoration and Protection for Existing Coastal Blue Carbon Ecosystems.

Authorizes NOAA, in coordination with the Interagency Working Group, State, local, and Tribal governments, and coastal stakeholders, to:

- Coordinate interagency and intergovernmental monitoring and research efforts;
- Develop national conservation goals and restoration priorities to maximize carbon sequestration and ecosystem benefits without duplicating existing federal activities;
- Establish pilot programs with state, local, and Tribal governments and coastal users to preserve intact ecosystems restore degraded ones, including by developing best management practices for regionally distinct coastal blue carbon ecosystems; and
- Develop additional activities that support long-term coastal and marine protection, improve carbon sequestration and fish and wildlife stewardship, and protect coastal resources of national, historical, and cultural significance.

Section 6. Coastal Carbon Data Clearinghouse.

Authorizes the Secretary of Smithsonian to establish a Coastal Carbon Data Clearinghouse to collect, store, and make accessible coastal blue carbon ecosystem data from national mapping and inventorying activities under this Act, and make the Clearinghouse available on NOAA's Digital Coast platform.

Section 7. National Academies Assessment of Carbon Dioxide Storage in Deep Seafloor Environments.

Authorizes NOAA to conduct an assessment with the National Academy of Sciences on the long-term effects of stored carbon dioxide in a deep seafloor environment.

Section 8. Blue Carbon Inventory Program.

Establishes a Coastal Blue Carbon Inventory Program under NOAA, designed to:

- Provide data for domestic and international coastal blue carbon ecosystem conservation projects, including coastal resource management assistance and resilience strategies;
- Support community engagement and education about restoration activities;
- Fill data gaps for unique ecosystem carbon sequestration and the role of marine wildlife and fisheries in the coastal blue carbon cycle;
- Provide technical assistance to coastal users, states, Tribes, and other entities engaged in coastal blue carbon ecosystem conservation, including universities, research institutions, and nonprofit organizations, through workshops, trainings, and carbon stock assessments;
- Maintain a publicly available digital library of program data, including open-source analysis tools, soil carbon data, and restoration project surveys; and
- Report to Congress on participant information, inventoried coastal blue carbon ecosystems, barriers to improve technical assistance, and program cost estimates.

Section 9. Assessment of Coastal Blue Carbon Ecosystem Climate Contributions.

Directs NOAA to conduct a national interagency assessment on the net emissions effects of coastal blue carbon ecosystems, including effects on:

- Carbon sequestration standards, including those that support coastal management and carbon accounting protocols;
- Effects of stored carbon dioxide released by ecosystem degradation;
- Atmospheric carbon dioxide removed by coastal blue carbon ecosystems;
- The role of marine sediments to sequester organic carbon;
- Barriers to data collection and restoration project management;
- The viability of developing a blue carbon credit and validation system;
- Opportunities to coordinate freshwater wetland research and restoration in the Great Lakes; and
- Reports to Congress on the findings and recommendations of the assessment.

Section 10. Amendments to the Digital Coast Act.

Provides conforming amendments to the Digital Coast Act to align coastal blue carbon ecosystem data publication and public availability requirements under this Act.

Section 11. Authorization of Appropriations.

Authorizes $15,000,000 to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031.