



# Seawall COALITION



## Who we are

The Seawall Coalition is a nonpartisan group of elected officials, military groups, businesses, and local leaders that have come together to unlock national solutions to sea level rise and flooding that support coastal and riverfront communities and protect our nation's residents, economy, and military installations.

### Our mission

Protecting our coasts from sea level rise is a national issue that must be met with national solutions - it is vitally important to our country's citizen well-being, economic strength, and security. Our coastal communities are the backbone of our country, home to over 125 million Americans, 37 of the top 50 largest ports in the country, and 18 military installations currently at risk from sea level rise.

With effective sea level rise planning our coastal communities can adapt and thrive. Investing in adaptation planning and projects can protect the ports, highways, and runways that drive our economy, creating jobs and economic opportunities for our local communities. But we must act now.

The Seawall Coalition advocates for practical national solutions to serve our communities. We support policies that strengthen our economy, invest in our coastal communities, and safeguard our national security.

Learn more at [seawallcoalition.org](http://seawallcoalition.org)

## Our platform



### 1 Invest in infrastructure that boosts the economy and protects property values

The United States is a maritime nation and our national economy relies on our coastal ports, highways, and other infrastructure that is at risk from sea level rise. We will support states and communities that are investing to make their infrastructure resilient to sea level rise by creating a source of dedicated federal funding and incentives. This could include adaptation trust funds, a revolving loan fund, tax breaks and incentives, and other programs that help drive investment in planning and infrastructure to prevent flood damage.

These investments help ensure coastal tourism and property values remain strong while also spurring innovation and creating jobs. Jobs constructing infrastructure will create local employment opportunities that cannot be outsourced. As our communities adapt to sea level rise and flooding, we'll also be able to build new businesses and innovation that we can export, similar to how the Netherlands currently gains about 2% of its GDP through water-related products and services. With smart investment, America can take a leadership role in creating sea level rise solutions and bring this innovation to others around the globe.

#### Policies

- ▶ Support communities investing in adaptation through dedicated federal funding and incentives, which could include adaptation trust funds, revolving loan funds, tax breaks and incentives, and other funding programs
- ▶ Increase innovation grants for research into flood mitigation technology
- ▶ Facilitate the exchange of best practices among coastal communities



## 2 Use smart planning to keep communities safe and save taxpayer dollars

History demonstrates that proactive protection pays off. Studies have found that for every \$1 spent on pre-disaster mitigation, we save \$4 in disaster relief, along with untold heartache for affected communities. Yet the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) currently spends only a fraction of 1% of its budget on mitigation, and we have few other federal programs that incentivize these investments.

We can invest in proactive protection that saves taxpayer money and protects our coastal communities by hardwiring resilience into federal programs. We support expanding FEMA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) pre-disaster mitigation programs and incentivizing resilience through the Department of Transportation and other programs. We can also give communities the flexibility to invest in living shoreline and other natural infrastructure solutions by making the planning and permitting more efficient. To responsibly steward taxpayer dollars, we also need one consistent flood-ready standard for all major federal infrastructure investments, so that we're making smart investments in infrastructure that is built to last.

To make smart investments, our local communities, businesses, and homeowners also need accurate information on flood risks and reliable federal FEMA flood maps. Currently, 15% of the federal FEMA flood maps we rely on have not been updated since the 1970 or 1980s, and none of the maps include sea level rise. We need to invest in updating the maps and making sure they include past and projected sea level rise so we can plan responsibly.

### **Policies**

- ▶ Support communities investing in adaptation through dedicated federal funding and incentives, which could include adaptation trust funds, revolving loan funds, tax breaks and incentives, and other funding programs
- ▶ Increase innovation grants for research into flood mitigation technology
- ▶ Facilitate the exchange of best practices among coastal communities



### **3 Build back stronger to protect communities from future flooding**

When disaster strikes and the national government spends billions to rebuild, we need to build back stronger so our communities can withstand future flooding and do not keep drawing on taxpayer dollars to rebuild again and again. By creating federal standards for rebuilding that take a clear-eyed view of future risk, we can keep our citizens safe and prevent wasteful spending. We can also improve HUD, FEMA, and Small Business Administration (SBA) programs so that they allow and incentivize rebuilding to higher standards.

#### **Policies**

- ▶ Create federal resilience standards for rebuilding after hurricanes and flood damage
- ▶ Issue guidance from HUD on how the Community Development Block Grant program can be used to encourage adaptive rebuilding
- ▶ Have FEMA authorize modifications and mitigation measures to support adaptation of damaged facilities with Public Assistance funding
- ▶ Promote additional studies that evaluate high-risk areas to identify and authorize projects that will be ready for immediate federal funding under emergency congressional authorizations
- ▶ Allow the SBA Disaster Loan Program to incentivize resilient construction



#### 4 Ensure our military installations are ready to deploy 365 days a year

Many of our military facilities currently have tidal flooding 50 times per year, and over a dozen of our military installations are on track to face flooding 100 times per year by 2050. This puts our national security and military readiness at risk. Some installations are already taking action to protect against sea level rise, but we need coordinated national action to ensure all our military installations are prepared for the future. We need the Department of Defense (DOD) to strategically prioritize adaptation plans for our installations and study the effects of sea level rise on our military readiness. Even when military installations are prepared, flooded roads leading to them can hinder servicepeople from reaching their installations to conduct their missions. The military needs more flexibility to invest in projects outside our installations to make sure servicepeople can deploy quickly to keep our country safe.

#### **Policies**

- ▶ Give the DOD the needed authority to assess the impact of sea level rise and flooding on our military installations, create adaptation plans and commence critical projects to protect our installations and maintain readiness
- ▶ Allow military services the authority to access their mission and operational funds to address sea level rise and flooding issues that directly affect their mission (i.e. roads onto installations, power grids)

