



# NATIONAL SOLUTIONS TO SEA LEVEL RISE AND FLOODING

[seawallcoalition.org](http://seawallcoalition.org)

# Who we are

The Seawall Coalition is a nonpartisan group of elected officials, military groups, nonprofit organizations, 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.



# Our platform



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 funding and incentives. This could include adaptation trust funds, revolving loan funds, 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



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a large metal compass, drawing a circle on a technical blueprint. The blueprint is filled with various lines, numbers, and text, including phrases like 'NOTE 11', 'EXISTING ELEVATION', 'WITH LINE INDICATING LINE OF PANELS', 'END OF T1 START OF T2 ALIGN T1 WITH LINE INDICATING LINE OF REST ROOM', and 'INSTRUCTION PLAN'. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, and the compass is in the center, with its legs touching the paper.

## 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 risk and reliable FEMA flood maps. Currently, 15% of the FEMA flood maps have not been updated since the 1970s or 1980s, and none of the maps include sea level rise. We need to invest in updating the maps and should make sure they include past and projected sea level rise so we can plan responsibly.

## Policies

- ▶ Increase pre-disaster mitigation funding across agencies
- ▶ Adopt federal minimum standards for building and apply these standards to all major federal investments
- ▶ Update FEMA flood maps to reflect current data and include sea level rise projections
- ▶ Support efficient planning and permitting for living shorelines, including working with the Army Corps to expand the new living shoreline permit category to incorporate a broader range of nature-based sea level rise solutions



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



Many of our military facilities have tidal flooding 50 times per year, and over a dozen of these 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 (e.g. roads onto installations, power grids)

# Member benefits



**A strong platform** to advocate as part of a nonpartisan group for national solutions to sea level rise and flooding that invest in and protect our coastal communities

**A forum** for best practices and support in developing local and state-level responses to sea level rise flooding



**Opportunities and tools** to communicate with residents on sea level rise challenges and solutions, including media opportunities if you're interested