

**THE TOP TEN CONCEPTS  
FOR AN  
INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2008**

During the past eighteen months, we have met extensively with our state and federal partners and our stakeholders across the country to discuss the future of coastal management. As a result of these efforts, we are evaluating major changes to the Coastal Zone Management Act. Many of the features of the existing CZMA will be retained, including a reliance on a strong Federal-State partnership to manage coastal and ocean resources, but there are a number of changes intended to improve coastal and ocean governance by making it: more prioritized and strategic, more accountable, and more coordinated. The changes we are recommending would create a number of new roles and opportunities for NOAA.

- 1. The Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management Act would focus on three distinct national priority areas: maintaining ecosystem function; strengthening coastal communities, and integrating and targeting science and capacity building.** This is a major change, as the CZMA currently has a very general focus, calling for the development of programs to “preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, to restore or enhance the resources of the Nation’s coastal zone for this and succeeding generations.” Although the proposed Act, would continue to require states and reserves to address a comprehensive set of issues, the focus of their activities would be on the three goals.
- 2. Plans, at relevant scales and meeting national objectives, would be prepared and approved as the basis for funding. Plans would include measurable objectives to help achieve the goals of the Act would be developed at the national, regional, and state levels.** The existing CZMA does not require plans or measurable objectives, but just programs. Today, approved state programs must identify enforceable policies that address policy areas articulated in national guidance, but no benchmarks were ever established and no measurable objectives were required, so it has been very difficult to demonstrate the success of the program. National objectives would be set by NOAA, and regional objectives could be set by regional entities. All states would receive some minimal funding to support a core competency inn coastal management; but significant program funding would be competitive on the basis of meeting national objectives.
- 3. The proposed Act would require all federal agencies to support the National Policy of the Act as they undertake activities that could impact the coastal zone.** In the existing CZMA it says that the Secretary may “encourage the participation and cooperation of ... the Federal agencies having programs affecting the coastal zone, in carrying out the purposes of this chapter.”
- 4. A national integrated coastal and ocean management program would be created, and provide the Secretary of Commerce with the authority to provide leadership for our state and local resource management partners and federal colleagues; and to integrate research, science translation and technical assistance .** Currently, under the

CZMA, NOAA has a very limited role in coastal management, and no responsibility for substantive outcomes. The Secretary approves state programs and estuarine reserves and any subsequent changes to them, and also approves annual cooperative agreements to channel funding to the state programs and reserves. Research and technical assistance are not specifically tied to the implementation of the Act. The Act would emphasize that certain existing NOAA programs and functions are integral to the implementation effort.

5. **NOAA, working with the states, would lead a national assessment of coastal trends and conditions of natural, social, cultural, historical, and economic resources.** This periodic assessment would help to direct planning and resource management activities at the state, regional, and national levels.
6. **Each coastal state would prepare a management plan that would have measurable objectives to address national priorities such as protecting habitat and making communities more resilient to coastal hazards and climate change.** The existing state coastal zone management programs are not required to have plans, just a series of enforceable policies. Therefore, it has been very difficult to show results.
7. **Each state's coastal planning area would be based on uniform national criteria.** Currently, each state coastal management program develops their own boundaries based on the needs of the state's enforceable policies. This has made it exceedingly difficult to develop a consistent set of indicators of the coastal condition that can give a regional or national picture. For coastal assessments and planning purposes, the states would develop planning areas that include coastal watersheds and their territorial sea.
8. **A National Coastal and Ocean Management Foundation would be created by the Act.** This foundation would be patterned after the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and could develop partnerships with the private sector and nongovernmental organizations to help achieve the goals of the Act.
9. **The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program would become an integrated part of the coastal management program.** This would help make this land acquisition program an implementation tool that would help achieve the goals of the Act. Competitive funding would be based on national criteria and objectives in approved state and local plans.
10. **Regional coastal and ocean partnerships would be encouraged, both for federal agencies and for the states, and would be eligible for competitive federal funding at the state level .** In addition to providing a forum for planning and resource management across jurisdictional boundaries, these partnerships could help to address regional research needs and improve distribution of applied science to managers through the establishment and use of regional collaborative institutes.