

**SUPPORT LETTER FOR SHORE PROTECTION FUNDING**  
**New Jersey Legislative Bills S2449 and A3535**

New Jersey is one of the oldest developed coasts in the nation and considered the country's most densely populated shoreline. Throughout its history, New Jersey has invested in its beaches to protect people, property and infrastructure from storm damage and its impact on the tourism economy, recreational opportunities, and natural habitats. The state's 239 coastal communities are especially vulnerable to sea level rise and the nor'easters and hurricanes that cause extreme flooding and beach erosion.

Periodic beach/dune re-nourishment projects provide protection against storm surge from coastal storms and create healthy and safe beaches that attract millions of residents, businesses, and visitors to the Jersey Shore. Our Jersey Shore restaurants and boardwalk entertainment centers are dependent on beach goers for their businesses. In 2021, forty-eight million people visited our beaches, contributing to the Shore's \$20 Billion annual tourism revenue. Summer of 2022 was another post-pandemic banner year for our beach communities. Beaches and dunes also provide habitat for some of the state's most vulnerable beach-dwelling species that thrive in our coastal environment.

Funding for beach protection projects is through the dedicated Shore Protection Fund, a unique cost-share partnership between New Jersey and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that, since 1992, has provided millions of federal dollars for beach and bay construction, restoration, and maintenance. The Army Corps pays 65% of construction costs and 50% of future maintenance costs of beach nourishment projects with state funding at 35%. Non-federal municipal projects are funded through a state/local cost-share, with the state contributing 75% to the local government's 25%. Without this cost-share partnership, the state and shore municipalities would not have the funding to restore eroding beaches. -

*The future success of this partnership is dependent on the State's ability to pay its share of project costs.*

The reality is that the Shore Protection Fund is seriously underfunded. The Fund's \$25 million budget, **(last adjusted in 1998)**, is no longer enough to support the state's cost-share partnership with the Army Corp and address ongoing needs for state/local funded municipal projects.

Legislative action (S2449 and A3535) to increase the annual dedicated Shore Protection Fund from its current level of \$25 million to \$50 million will ensure that the State has *dedicated* funding in place to protect our cost-share partnership with the federal government, build a resilient coastal infrastructure, and preserve our long-term investment and economic benefits of coastal protection.

Shore protection is important to every citizen of New Jersey without regard to party or politics. Our coastline is our first line of defense against the growing threats of climate change. Damage to our coast impacts everyone's health, safety, and livelihood. Passage of the bi-partisan Senate bill S2449 and Assembly bill A3535 will re-affirm the state's century-long commitment to coastal protection and address the complex and costly impacts of climate change on our coastal and inland communities. We look to the New Jersey Legislature for passage of S2449 and A3535.

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*Draft may be adapted by all our supporters. Thank you!*

**Please send your letter of support to the following:**

Sen. Vin Gopal – Primary Co-sponsor S2449

Sen Vincent Polistina – Primary Co-sponsor S2449

Asw. Yvonne Lopez – Primary sponsor A3535

Sen. Bob Smith – Chair, Senate Environment Committee

Asm James Kennedy – Chair, Assembly Environment Committee

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