



ACTION STATEMENT

The resiliency of our 127-mile coastline and the extenuating bays and rivers that link to our coastline are critical to our state's economy, job growth, infrastructure, tourism, and business development. Most important, our coastal infrastructure is New Jersey's first line of defense from devastating storms that destroy property, livelihoods, and communities.

The dedicated Shore Protection Fund, created by the Legislature in 1992, has been the engine driving the shore's robust economy. The Fund generated a cost-share partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) that has provided an annual return on investment of billions in federal dollars for beach and bay construction, restoration, and maintenance. The cost-share partnership typically provides 65% of federal funding for beach protection projects with the local share at 35% - a return on investment of \$2 in federal funding for every \$1 of State funding. New Jersey is second only to Florida in the amount of federal funding the state receives for coastal mitigation projects.

The 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 – 24 years ago), can no longer support the state's cost-share partnership with the Army Corps and address ongoing needs for state/local funded municipal projects. Further, with rising sea levels, we can anticipate more frequent and more severe storms, flooding, and erosion causing greater threats to the resiliency of our coast and its impact on people, property, and the economy.

Our coastal infrastructure is a major economic asset that requires further investment to respond to the increasingly volatile climate change environment. Senate bill S2449 and Assembly bill A3535 seek an increase in dedicated funding to \$50 million annually for the Shore Protection Fund. Passage of these bills will re-affirm the state's century-long commitment to coastal protection and provide a sustainable long-term resource – our cost-share partnership with the federal government - to address the complex and costly impacts of climate change. The State of New Jersey is the economic beneficiary of our healthy, safe, attractive beaches.

Shore protection is important to every citizen of New Jersey. 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 coast. We look to the New Jersey Legislature for passage of S2449 and A3535.

Sincerely,

Signature

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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