



## Digital Coast Act – Talking Points

- Coastal watershed counties were home to 163.8 million Americans in 2010, approximately 52% of the United States population. This number is expected to increase by more than 15 million by 2020. Of the supporting national infrastructure, significant percentages of interstates, arterials, airports, and rail lines are vulnerable to storm surge from extreme events. Over half of the Nation’s economic productivity is located within coastal zones.
- Balancing economic development with ecological management requires accurate data and integrated information that enable coastal communities to address many coastal and emergency management issues.
- NOAA’s Digital Coast project is designed to meet this need. The Digital Coast is providing a constituent-driven, information resource that enables access to critical data, decision support tools, training, and best practices for integrating geospatial information in support of policy priorities.
- These priorities are set by such stakeholder groups as the American Planning Association, the National Association of Counties, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association, the National States Geographic Information Council, The Nature Conservancy, the Urban Land Institute, and the Coastal States Organization.
- NOAA leads this consortium on a mission to improve coastal economies and ecological wealth by helping communities address their challenges with just, cost-effective, and participatory solutions.
- MAPPSS strongly believes this project should:
  - work with stakeholders to identify geospatial priorities;
  - improve coordination of coastal mapping and management activities;
  - use standards and standardized methods for data acquisition, processing, and distribution to ensure broadest utility of data;
  - promote best practices when applying geospatial data for coastal decision making; and
  - contract for the collection and creation of non-navigation feature data sets to include: shoreline change, satellite and aerial imagery, land use and land cover maps, benthic habitat mapping, terrestrial topography, shallow water bathymetry, and submerged aquatic vegetation.
- Legislation is needed to authorize this project into an official program.
- In March 2013, Reps. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD) and Don Young (R-AK) introduced H.R. 1382, the “Digital Coast Act of 2013” authorizing the Secretary of Commerce, through NOAA, to establish a constituent-driven program that collects priority coastal geospatial data and supports an information platform capable of efficiently integrating coastal data with decision support tools, training, and best practices to inform and improve local, State, regional, and Federal capacities to manage coastal regions.
- Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) will soon introduce the Senate bill with original cosponsors Mark Begich (D-AK), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Angus King (I-ME), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Maria Cantwell (D-WA). ***I urge Senator \_\_\_\_\_ to cosponsor the Digital Coast Act of 2014.***
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