



THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS

Established by Congress in 1987, the National Estuary Program (NEP) safeguards the country's most significant coastal ecosystems, along with the communities and economies that depend on them.

The National Estuary Program:



Drives economic activity

Estuarine and ocean economies **generate 2x more jobs** than the national average.^[1] Estuaries are centers of economic growth, seafood production, and tourism, and essential transportation infrastructure.



Fosters resilient communities

Estuaries mitigate threats to coastal communities through **storm protection and flood control**, shoreline stabilization, erosion prevention, and water filtration and storage.^[2]



Restores and protects coastal habitat

The NEP has restored and protected **over 2.5 million acres** along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, and in Puerto Rico.



Multiplies funding

For every dollar of public funding, **NEP leverages \$17** in local, state, and private-sector investment to protect and improve coastal environments, communities, and economies.

Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems on earth. People and wildlife, including millions of Americans and over 600 commercial fish species, rely on estuaries for food and clean water.

The NEP protects these ecosystems through infrastructure improvements, water quality monitoring, microplastics reduction, species management and recovery, harmful algal bloom (HAB) mitigation, coastal resilience planning, community education and engagement, and more.

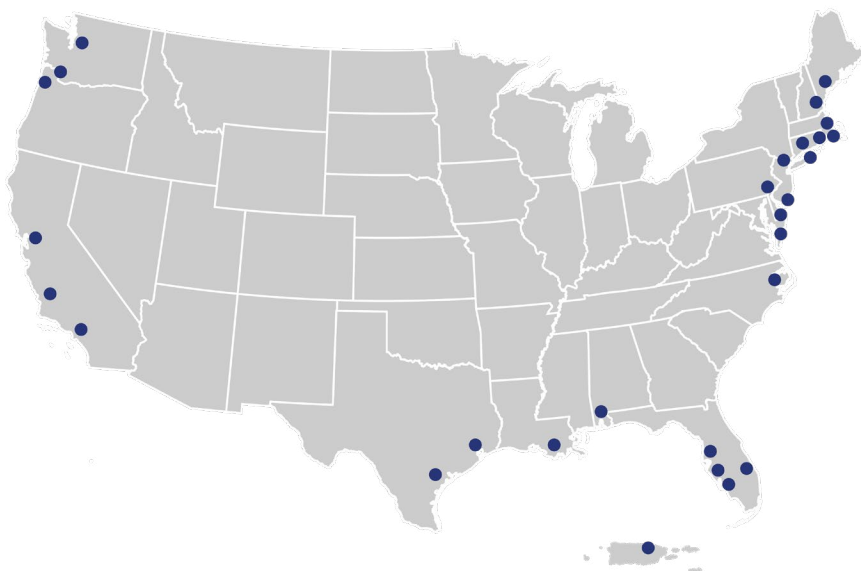
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Did you know?

- Estuary regions contain 40 percent of the population and support 47 percent of U.S. economic output.^[2]
- Estuaries provide habitat for 68 percent of U.S. commercial fish catch by value and 80 percent of U.S. recreational fish catch by weight.^[3]
- Coastal tourism and outdoor recreation contribute approximately \$143 billion to the national economy each year.^[4]
- Coastal wetlands capture and store atmospheric carbon 10 times faster than mature tropical forests and store three-to-five times more carbon per equivalent area than tropical forests.^[5]

Benefiting 28 Regions



Appropriations Request

We encourage Congress to fully fund the National Estuary Program at the authorized level^[6] of \$50 million, including at least \$1 million to each entity within the NEP, and to fund the innovative competitive awards program at \$4 million consistent with Public Law 116-337.

1. NOAA Report on the U.S. Marine Economy (2022)

2. The Economic Value of America's Estuaries (2021)

3. NOAA Fisheries, Estuarine Fish and Shellfish Species in U.S. Commercial and Recreational Fisheries: Economic Value as an Incentive to Protect and Restore Estuarine Habitat (2008)

4. NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Economics: National Ocean Watch (2018)

5. NOAA Blue Carbon White Paper (2022)

6. National Estuary Program. 33 U.S.C § 1330 (2021)