



Coastal States Organization Strategic Priorities 2012 - 2014

CSO Mission

To support the shared vision of the coastal states, commonwealths and territories for the protection, conservation, responsible use and sustainable economic development of the nation's coastal, ocean and Great Lakes resources.

Need for Action

The nation's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes are an invaluable resource environmentally, economically, and socially. These vital resources are under increasing pressure from a complex range of challenges including climate variability, competing uses, stressed ecosystems, and a systemic failure to adequately fund essential management functions. It is in the nation's best interest to address these problems at both the state and regional level. This requires a coordinated approach and adequate resources for the implementation of both traditional and innovative solutions. The Coastal States Organization, made up of thirty-five coastal states, territories, and commonwealths, recognizes the need for a focused approach to critical coastal challenges. CSO advances its mission in this Strategic Plan (Plan) through four priority areas: Leadership and Integrity, Member Services, Governance and Management and Funding. These goals define how CSO serves the states and territories and works with partners in Washington DC.

This plan details the goals and priorities to be pursued by CSO and serves as a guide for CSO's efforts through the end of 2014. The Strategic Plan is implemented through an annual work plan, prepared by CSO staff, which details tasks and responsible parties, in order to meet the identified mission. The Plan identifies the following priorities to be pursued by the CSO staff and members of the states and territories.

CSO works toward its mission using the following overarching approaches:

- 1) Identify shared state ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes management needs;
- 2) Influence the development and implementation of policies, legislation, programs and funding that support effective ocean, coastal and Great Lakes management;
- 3) Enable state coastal management professionals to lead at the regional and national levels;
- 4) Foster communication among states, territories and partners at the regional and national levels;
- 5) Involve CSO staff and members to create partnerships with federal agencies, NGOs, industry and other coastal stakeholders to advance effective ocean and coastal management; and,
- 6) Advocate across all topic areas for ocean, coastal and Great Lakes governance approaches that recognize states' sovereignty and public trust responsibilities.

I. LEADERSHIP & INTEGRITY

Goals

- ✦ *CSO is a leader and trusted source of information for coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes management.*
- ✦ *CSO advocates with integrity and is a respected voice for the coastal states, territories and commonwealths.*

CSO Action

To support this effort, CSO will:

- Harness the expertise of CSO staff, its members and partners to access credible, objective information on priority coastal issues.
- Advocate for the states and territories to the Administration and Congress through ethical, professional work practices.
 - Provide timely and accurate responses to Congress, the Administration, and partners for information on coastal issues from the states and territories.
 - Support entities advancing priorities linked to those of CSO including coastal organizations, private stakeholders, and state office associations.
 - Conduct tracking of meetings with, requests from, and responses to Congressional partners.
 - Conduct tracking of letters of support and meeting sponsorships.

Benchmarks

- CSO policies/language are submitted for consideration in legislation or congressional reports on coastal issues.
- CSO policies/language are submitted for consideration in policies by partner entities.
- CSO increases its number of strategic contacts to relevant Congressional members and staff.

II. MEMBER SERVICES

Goal

- ✦ *CSO provides credible information, timely services and thorough assistance to its members.*

CSO Action

To support this effort, CSO will:

- Harness the leadership and expertise of CSO and its members to address issues important to the states and territories, including: coastal management and CZMA reauthorization, adaptation to climate variability, regional ocean governance,

habitat conservation, renewable ocean energy, island affairs, and funding for these key issues.¹

- Support work groups that are tied to annual priorities, as identified by the Executive Committee, and ad-hoc groups created for temporary needs.
- Assist CSO workgroups to draft CSO policies for consideration by the membership, update policies as needed, and assist CSO members to transmit those needs to the Administration and Congress and use the statements to advocate for states' needs.
- Keep members informed about ocean and coastal policy developments from Washington DC relevant to the states through The CSO Weekly Report and other forms of communication.
- Provide a "rapid response" function for states during situations where critical information or action is necessary in a tight time period.
- Support the exchange of information among state delegates to discuss common issues and potential coastal management solutions, share with appropriate partners and assist in setting collaborative priorities among program partners.
- Prepare biannual report that tracks
 - delegate responses to CSO action alerts;
 - timely delivery and recipients of the Weekly Report;
 - completion of workplans within identified time periods; and
 - briefings/meetings attendance.

Benchmarks

- CSO/Delegates host and/or participate in five relevant briefings or DC-based meetings on identified priorities.
- Information delivered to key Congressional staff, Administration Officials and other stakeholders through testimony, presentations, and fact sheets.

III. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Goal

★ *CSO evaluates and advocates for ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes management needs and supports management efforts at the state, regional and national levels.*

CSO Action

To support this effort, CSO will:

- Collaborate with partners to raise the profile of and develop champions for coastal management, focusing on the role of state programs in advancing national interests.
- Support reauthorization of the CZMA.
- Communicate the benefits and achievements of coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes management efforts to Congress and the Administration.
- Continue the national dialogue in partnership with NOAA and other partners on ways to improve coastal, ocean, Great Lakes, and local management activities,

¹ CSO's highest "Tier I" priorities are identified annually by the CSO Executive Board with recommendations from CSO Staff.

particularly those put forth in the CZMA and those identified annually as CSO priorities.

- Ensure that coastal state and territories' views, roles, and responsibilities are communicated to the National Ocean Council (NOC).
- Support the efforts of the NOC Governance Coordinating Committee as appropriate.
- Facilitate the annual appropriations request of the regional ocean partnerships and serve as a partner to the collective group of ROPs.

Benchmarks

- Relationships developed with at least three nontraditional coastal stakeholders via engagement in the CZMA 40th anniversary celebration.
- CSO testimony offered at two congressional hearings on coastal management-related hearings on coastal-management related priorities (e.g., appropriations, CZMA reauthorization).
- CSO Staff or Members visit/contact each congressional member on relevant CZMA subcommittees and committees.
- NOC Strategic Action Plans relevant to CSO priorities are consistent with state priorities, clear roles for states, and are implemented with states as partners.

IV. FUNDING

Goal

- ✦ *CSO secures stable, long-term fiscal support of state and federal programs that prioritize state-identified issues and restore, manage and protect the nation's coastal, ocean and Great Lakes resources.*

CSO Action

To support this effort, CSO will work to:

- Secure funding for all state coastal zone management programs, including CZM state grants and other priority programs that assist with the management of coastal, ocean, or Great Lakes resources.
- Work with public and private partners to develop alternative funding mechanisms and diversify coastal management funding.
- Seek better coordination and alignment of federal funding for coastal issues by working with relevant federal agencies at the national and regional levels to realign funds and identify efficiencies to advance shared state-federal priorities.
- Work with NOAA to establish a dialog and prioritization process so that state priorities are considered in NOAA-funded projects or studies that impacts each respective State.
- Advocate for funding of science programs that support management needs, especially those identified within CSO priorities, for the conservation and sustainable use of coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resources.
- Demonstrate and communicate to Congress, the Administration, and key stakeholders the environmental and economic value of coastal and ocean programs to the nation.

- Assist members to achieve efficient access to information of funding opportunities.
- Assess the realignment of funds by federal agencies related to coastal issues.
- Embark on a multi-year, phased-approach effort to build support for increased funding for CZM programs.

Benchmarks

- Staff/Delegates visit all representatives for Appropriations Committee/Subcommittees.
- The number of Congressional members that support increased funding for CZMA increases each year.
- Accounting for overall federal budget cuts, CZMA funds remain stable or are cut by no more than 10%.