



COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT

The United States Congress enacted the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) in 1972 to address the challenges of growth in the coastal zone. The goal of the CZMA is to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible to restore or enhance the resources of the nation's coastal zone.

CZMA Purpose

In the late 1960s, the U.S. coasts were under pressure from population growth that drove increasing and competing demands for the use of coastal lands and waters. These competing interests also put pressure on coastal resources, wildlife, and ecosystems. Congress recognized the importance of ensuring the protection and management of healthy coasts and passed the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) in 1972.

The CZMA declares that it is the national policy to “preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, to restore or enhance, the resources of the Nation’s coastal zone for this and succeeding generations.” It further declares that the States are responsible for the wise use of the land and water resources of the coastal zone through management programs; that the Federal government is responsible for providing both technical and financial assistance to the States to develop and implement these management programs; and such programs should encourage public participation and coordination between State, Federal, local, regional, and international organizations where appropriate.

The CZMA has been amended several times to expand authorities and add focus areas while preserving the original purpose of the Act.

CZMA History

- **1969 - Stratton Commission recommends creation of a state-federal partnership for coastal zone management**
- **1970 - NOAA and CSO are established**
- **1972 - CZMA is enacted**
- **Amended eleven times with major amendments including:**
 - **Increasing the required State share of matching funds for administrative and coastal resource improvement grants**
 - **Requiring enforceable policies for State Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Programs**
 - **Federal consistency revisions including the addition of appeals procedures and the inclusion of activities outside of a State’s coastal zone that impacts the coastal zone.**
 - **Addition of Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program**

KEY SECTIONS OF THE CZMA

Section 306 - Administrative Grants

Section 306 enumerates the core requirements each State Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program must meet in order for the Secretary of the Department of Commerce (Secretary) to approve the program. This includes the requirement for the development and approval of enforceable policies. It also authorizes the Secretary to provide the States with approved programs with grant funding, in accordance with an allocation formula and with a one-to-one match by the States, for the purpose of administering their approved CZM Programs.

Section 306A - Coastal Resource Improvement Program

Section 306A authorizes the Secretary to provide States with grants for the purpose of improving their coastal zone. States must provide one-to-one match. Authorized activities include low-cost construction projects, land acquisitions, shoreline restoration projects, public access improvement projects, and educational, interpretive, and management costs.

Section 307 - Coordination and Cooperation

Section 307 establishes a framework (known as federal consistency) under which States may review Federal actions - Federal agency activities, activities requiring a federal license or permit, federal financial support, and Outer Continental Shelf activities - that affect their coastal zone for consistency with enforceable policies of their federally approved CZM Program. The Secretary may override an objection if the proposed activity is found to be consistent with the national objectives of the CZMA or necessary in the interest of national security.

Section 307A - Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

Section 307A establishes a program for the acquisition and protection of important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values; are threatened by conversion from their natural, undeveloped, or recreational state to other uses; or could be managed or restored to effectively conserve, enhance, or restore ecological function.

Section 309 - Coastal Zone Enhancement Grants

Section 309 authorizes the Secretary to provide grants to States, with no match required, for the purpose of developing improvements to State CZM Programs to achieve a variety of enumerated CZM enhancement objectives.

Section 310 - Technical Assistance

Section 310 directs the Secretary to provide technical assistance and management-oriented research to support Section 309 enhancements, international cooperation, and other efforts to improve coastal zone management.

Section 315 - National Estuarine Research Reserve System

Section 315 establishes a Reserve System and authorizes the Secretary to provide States with grants for the acquisition of land, with a one-to-one State match, and the management of reserves, with a 30% State match. There are currently 29 reserves in the System.

Section 318 - Authorization of Appropriations

Section 318 authorizes the Secretary to provide appropriations for the purpose of implementing the CZMA. Appropriations authorization expired in 1999 and has not been reauthorized.

The Coastal States Organization (CSO) is a nonprofit organization that represents the Governors of the Nation's coastal States, Territories, and Commonwealths on national ocean and coastal policy issues to maintain the health and vitality of our Nation's coasts.

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