



Protecting Coastal Health

The Great Lakes feature 10,900 miles of coastline. The Great Lakes region is the third most populated coastal region in the United States with 27.5 million people, or 18 percent of the nation's total coastal population (as of 2003). Within the region, the 158 coastal counties constitute 28 percent of the total land area and contain 33 percent of the population, including two of the nation's 10 largest metropolitan areas: Detroit and Chicago. Between 1982 and 1997, developed land in the Great Lakes region (eight states) increased by 5 million acres, a 27 percent increase. In 2003, the population density of the combined coastal counties in the Great Lakes region was 238 persons per square mile, up from 226 in 1980.

This unique regional resource represents a geologically, chemically and biologically dynamic environment, providing valuable ecologic and economic resources to the region. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 established a nationwide federal-state partnership that provides financial and technical assistance to states to develop and implement coastal management programs. The CZMA gives states broad flexibility in establishing their programs, but all state programs must meet federal objectives to protect sensitive shoreline resources, improve public access to the coast, manage coastal development, and protect lives and property from the risk of coastal hazards. The CZMA is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through their Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management. This office also oversees a number of other important programs, such as the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). Seven of the Great Lakes states have approved coastal management programs in place. The eighth state, Illinois, anticipates having its program adopted soon. The CZMA highlights the importance of coastal and estuarine areas and advances policies that preserve and enhance the ecological, conservation, recreational and aesthetic values of coastal areas.



Oak St. beach, Chicago.

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000 (BEACH Act) is another important program that protects Great Lakes coastal resources, as well as human health. Between 2004 and 2005, the total number of beach closing and advisories at Great Lakes beaches increased by 5 percent, to nearly 3,000 days. The BEACH Act program goals are to improve public health and environmental protection programs for beachgoers and to provide the public with information about the quality of their beach water. Toward this end, the BEACH Act authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assist states, tribes and territories in developing and implementing beach water quality monitoring programs. Further, these programs establish mechanisms for alerting the public of the risk of exposure to disease-causing organisms at public beaches. The program puts an emphasis on five core areas: strengthening beach standards and testing; providing faster laboratory test methods; predicting pollution; investing in health and methods research; and informing the public. All eight of the Great Lakes states benefit from BEACH Act funds.

Great Lakes Commission Requests to Congress

The Great Lakes Commission requests congressional support for the following priorities to conserve and protect unique coastal resources in the Great Lakes basin:

- **Reauthorize and fully fund the Coastal Zone Management Act** at \$120 million nationwide.
- **Reauthorize and fully fund the BEACH Act** at \$30 million nationwide.

Funding History

Coastal Health Priority	Fiscal Year Funding (millions of dollars)					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009*	GLC Request
Coastal Zone Management Act	\$70.0	\$72.7	\$65.8	\$67.5	TBD	\$120
BEACH Act	\$9.9	\$9.8	\$9.8	\$9.7	TBD	\$30

*Appropriations for FY2009 are under a continuing resolution until March 6, 2009; final appropriations bills have not been passed.

Committee Jurisdiction

Coastal Health Priority	Committee Jurisdiction
Coastal Zone Management Act	House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
BEACH Act	House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Progress to Date

The nation's coastal and ocean resources are under increasing pressure from population growth and development. Coastal areas host over 50 percent of the total U.S. population within only 17 percent of the nation's land area. Between 1994 and 2015, coastal population is projected to increase by 28 million people. The CZMA has enabled Great Lakes states to balance the demands of coastal development with the need to protect fragile coastal ecosystems. For example, Pennsylvania's coastal program has implemented a policy to prevent the introduction, spread and impact of aquatic nuisance species. Indiana's coastal program has restored or protected more than 850 acres of coastal habitat with the help of CZMA funds. These are just a small sampling of the dozens of on-the-ground projects undertaken each year with CZMA funds that provide public access, protect sensitive coastal habitats, and protect lives and property from the risk of coastal hazards. Great Lakes states contribute matching funds for coastal management at an average of over \$11 million per year. In 2009 legislation was introduced in the Senate (S. 22) to reauthorize and amend the CZMA and incorporate the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program into the CZMA. The Coastal States Organization has drafted recommendations on reauthorizing CZMA based on a year-long visioning process.

Since the BEACH Act was passed, the number of monitored beaches in the United States has more than tripled. New water quality standards have been set and more rapid methods for detection have been developed and implemented. In Indiana, monitoring frequency has more than doubled at many of the state's 22 coastal beaches and permanent kiosks have been installed to display water advisory notices. In Wisconsin, BEACH Act funds help pay for monitoring and notification as well as website maintenance. Legislation to reauthorize the BEACH Act was introduced in both the House (H.R. 2537) and Senate (S. 1560) in 2007, but failed to pass during the 110th Congress. Reauthorizing the BEACH Act should be a priority of the 111th Congress.

Economic and Environmental Benefits

Coastal tourism, attributable in part to clean beaches, generates substantial revenues for states and local communities. As a result, coastal pollution leading to beach closures can have a significant impact on local economies. Without proper management and public notification, this pollution also poses a significant human health risk. The Brookings Institution estimates that a 20 percent reduction in beach closures would result in an economic benefit of more than \$130 million per year. State coastal management and beach monitoring programs also play a critical role in achieving Great Lakes restoration goals. These goals were articulated in the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy*. The GLRC Strategy recommends short-term actions to address invasive species, habitat and species, coastal health, Areas of Concern, nonpoint source pollution, toxics, indicators and sustainable development. State coastal and beach programs, supported by CZMA and BEACH Act funds, address all of these priority issues by providing grants, technical assistance and outreach for hundreds of projects every year.

More Information

Great Lakes Information Network: www.glin.net/envt/air-land/cstzone.html

Coastal Zone Management Program: www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/programs/czm.html

Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act: www.epa.gov/beaches