



## **Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm (BEACH) Act**

Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE) and Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-VA)

**Supported by:** National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Foundation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Shellfish Growers Association, Taxpayers for Common Sense, Reinsurance Association of America, National Association of Wetland Managers, R Street Institute, Wetlands Watch, Back Bay Restoration Foundation, Lynnhaven River NOW, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, National Aquarium, Southern Environmental Law Center, Healthy Gulf, Surfrider Foundation, Western Carolina University, Union of Concerned Scientists, The Association of State Floodplain Managers

### **Background**

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) protects 3.5 million acres of our nation's coastal barrier islands and wetlands by prohibiting most federal financial assistance and development on designated coastal areas. By preventing taxpayer funds from being used to develop these pristine areas, CBRA has saved the taxpayer \$9.5 billion, protected coastal communities from deadly storms, and protected habitats that support important economies and wildlife.

The ***Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm (BEACH) Act*** is a bipartisan reauthorization of CBRA that will enlarge the CBRA System by adding more than 290,000 acres to it. This will further save taxpayers money, expand flood protections for today's coastal communities, and conserve important habitat. This bill also adopts comprehensive revised maps prepared through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Hurricane Sandy Remapping Project to right size the program. Lastly, this bill enacts new policies fought for by Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester that will protect inland communities impacted by climate change and support coastal businesses not previously eligible for disaster relief assistance.

### **Provisions Fought for in the BEACH Act by Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester**

- **Evaluation of Coastal Ecosystem Dynamics** - This provision directs the Fish and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies to evaluate coastal barrier areas that are vulnerable to coastal hazards, including flooding, storm surge, wind, erosion, and sea level rise. This could lead to the preservation of more sensitive land from the impacts of extreme weather.
- **Exceptions to Limitations on Expenditures** - This provision newly expands eligibility for federal disaster funding to aquaculture businesses if their businesses are established inside of a CBRA unit.
- **Definition of Coastal Barrier** - This provision expands the definition of coastal barrier to include areas that are and will be vulnerable to coastal hazards. This will prevent tax dollars from being spent on land development in sensitive areas.

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