



National Estuarine
Research Reserve
ASSOCIATION

14 June 2016

The Honorable Senator Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Justice Science, and Related Agencies
716 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate Commerce Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Roger Wicker
Member, Commerce, Justice Science, and Related Agencies
United States Senate Commerce Committee
555 Dirkson Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for S. 3038, Coastal Coordination Act of 2016

Ranking Member Nelson and Senator Wicker:

I write today to express support for the Coastal Coordination Act of 2016. NERRA is a not-for-profit scientific and educational organization dedicated to the protection, understanding, and science-based management of our nation's estuaries and coasts. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) is a national program with local relevance. As you are aware, 28 reserves have been designated in 22 states and Puerto Rico, protecting over 1.3 million acres of land and water in perpetuity. This unique state-federal partnership brings the scientific expertise and financial investment of NOAA into coastal communities across the country. Investments in the research reserves support locally implemented science-based coastal resource management, research, and education programs. As a network, the sites study important estuarine trends, and conduct science based education and outreach to meet national priorities as mandated by Congress in the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972.

Thank you for bringing forward important legislation to further the work done at these special places. Since the designation of the first reserve in 1974, the NERRS program has grown as states have increasingly recognized the value of the program. The addition of new reserves has provided more science, training, and education resources that can be applied nationally.

I fully anticipate that within the next year, the NERRS will complete a strategic plan that details the growth and vision for the NERRS. The strategic planning process will be developed in partnership between NOAA and all 28 reserve sites; and will take into account the recommendations for growth of the NERRS from the independent 2016 NERRS Blue Ribbon Panel report. I respectfully request that the committee acknowledge the potential for additional funding beyond the bill's authorizing amount, consistent with the addition of future reserves to the system.

Thank you for your leadership on coastal and estuarine related issues.

Sincerely,



Cory Riley
President
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association

cc: NERRA Board