



THE ASSOCIATION OF
**NATIONAL
ESTUARY
PROGRAMS**

Established by Congress in 1987, the nonregulatory National Estuary Program (NEP) safeguards the country's most important coastal ecosystems, along with the communities and economies that depend on them.



Drives economic activity

Estuarine and ocean economies generate **2x more jobs** than the national average.^[1] The NEP's 28 Estuaries of National Significance are centers of economic growth, workforce development, domestic seafood production, tourism, recreation, and essential transportation and defense infrastructure across the country.



Multiplies Federal Dollars

For every dollar of federal funding, the **NEP leverages \$17** in local, state, and private-sector investment to protect and improve coastal environments, communities, and economies. The nationwide structure of the NEP guarantees that all benefit from advances in any individual state or region.



Fosters resilient communities

The NEP develops and implements locally tailored plans to **improve water quality**, natural resources, and habitat across critical watersheds. Healthy estuaries mitigate coastal threats through storm protection and flood control, shoreline stabilization, erosion prevention, and water filtration and storage.^[2]



Restores and protects coastal habitat

The NEP has restored and protected **over 2.5 million acres** along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, and in Puerto Rico. Upstream, it continues to protect rivers and watershed land areas that drain to and protect coastal habitats.

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Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems on earth. People and wildlife, including millions of Americans and over 600 commercial fish species, rely on estuaries for food and clean water.

The NEP protects these ecosystems through infrastructure improvements, water quality monitoring, harmful algal bloom (HAB) mitigation, coastal resilience planning, environmental education, and more.

Direct Impact ^[3]

In 2023 alone, the NEP:

- Completed 615 habitat projects and protected or restored more than 224,000 acres
- Completed 118 projects that addressed extreme weather impacts and improved adaptation and resiliency in communities
- Completed 53 projects that improved water connectivity
- Used 49% of leveraged funds to address water quality issues that threaten communities, including nonpoint pollution, stormwater, combined sewer overflow systems, and wastewater management

Benefiting 28 Regions



Appropriations Request

We encourage Congress to fully fund the National Estuary Program at the authorized level ^[4] of \$50 million, including at least \$1 million to each entity within the NEP, and to fund the innovative competitive awards program at \$4 million consistent with Public Law 116-337.

1. NOAA Report on the U.S. Marine Economy (2022).
 2. The Economic Value of America's Estuaries (2021).
 3. EPA National Estuary Program Accomplishments Report (2023).
 4. National Estuary Program. 33 U.S.C § 1330 (2021).

Funding History (per NEP)	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Authorization Level*	\$1.4M	\$1.4M	\$1.4M	\$1.4M
President's Budget	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$700,000	?
House/Senate Bills	\$800k/\$800k	\$875k/\$875k	\$850k/\$885,714	?
Enacted	\$850,000	\$850,000	?	?

*Prior bills authorized \$40M for Conservation Management Plans, when divided by 28 NEPs = ~1.4M