



2025 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership, which includes 10 counties and 27 cities in Central and Southwest Florida, as well as state and federal govt. agencies, have the following collective state legislative priorities for 2025. The CHNEP is part of the National Estuary Program (NEP) authorized by Congress, which fosters natural resource management that is consensus-based, non-regulatory, and based on sound science.

- Continue and expand annual funding for the Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership, including recurrent dedicated state funding.
- Create or strengthen nutrient and pollution reduction policies to reduce loads from wastewater, septic, agricultural runoff, reclaimed water, stormwater, fertilizer and internal “legacy loads”.
- Expand funding for innovative nutrient reduction projects, especially those that promote natural system solutions.
- Establish a statewide, long-term funding program through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection with sufficient funds for competitive, local cost-share projects for estuary restoration including:
 - Upgrading wastewater treatment to advanced wastewater treatment and increasing capacity
 - Septic to sewer conversion
 - Groundwater contamination remediation projects
 - Habitat protection and restoration (ex. seagrass, oysters, living shorelines)
 - Stormwater retrofitting projects
 - Legacy load / muck removal remediation projects
 - Resiliency projects and planning
- Support increased funding of Florida Forever and Florida Rural and Family Lands programs.
- Support of local governments’ continued ability to enact and maintain more stringent environmental protection ordinances.
- Support harmful algal bloom monitoring and emergency event response, prioritizing nutrient reduction efforts to decrease the duration of blooms.