

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA), 16 U.S.C. ch. 33 § 1451 et seq., is an Act of Congress passed in 1972 to encourage coastal states to develop and implement coastal zone management plans (CZMPs). This act was established as a United States National policy to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore or enhance, the resources of the Nation's coastal zone for this and succeeding generations.

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 showed that the United States Congress “recognized the importance of meeting the challenge of continued growth in the coastal zone”. Under this act two national programs were created, the National Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Out of 35 eligible states, only 34 have established management programs; Washington State was the first state to adopt the program in 1976.

The Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP), also called the National Coastal Zone Management Program, was established under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 and is administered by NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management (OCM). This program is designed to set up a basis for protecting, restoring, and establishing a responsibility in preserving and developing the nation’s coastal communities and resources, where they are under the highest pressure. The vision of the CZMP is to ensure that “the nation’s coast and oceans, including the Great Lakes and island territories, are healthy and thriving for this and future generation”. Their mission is “to ensure the conservation and responsible use of our nation’s coastal and ocean resources”.

The key goals of the National CZM program include: “protecting natural resources, managing development in high hazard areas, giving development priority to coastal-dependent uses, providing public access for recreation, coordinating state and federal actions”. Ultimately the outcomes from the CZMP are for “healthy and productive coastal ecosystems, and to have environmentally, economically, and socially vibrant and resilient coastal communities”. Further amendments were made in 1990 to address the problems of acid rain, ozone depletion, and toxic air pollution, and to establish a national permit program for stationary sources, and increased enforcement authority. The amendments also established new auto gasoline reformulation requirements, set Reid vapor pressure (RVP) standards to control Evaporative emissions from gasoline, and mandated new gasoline formulations sold from May to September in many states.