



2021 Federal Priorities

Hundreds of millions of Americans participate in ocean and Great Lakes recreation each year, supporting millions of jobs and generating nearly \$130 billion annually. Yet, our nation's coastal environment, which these industries depend upon, is increasingly under siege from the impacts of pollution, development, and climate change. Federal leadership is needed to ensure clean water, resilient coasts, and a healthy ocean to support this public use and economic activity.

PROTECT CLEAN WATER AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Sewage spills and stormwater runoff are threatening the health of beachgoers and coastal ecosystems. Sufficient water quality monitoring is needed to protect public health and inform solutions, while significant investments are needed to repair, upgrade and ensure climate resiliency for America's failing water infrastructure. These federal dollars will also create jobs and provide long lasting benefits to the nation's economy.

Support: At least \$10M appropriations for the EPA's BEACH Act Grants program and \$100B over 10 years for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund in an economic recovery/infrastructure package.

PREVENT PLASTIC POLLUTION

Each year 11 million metric tons of wasteful plastic pollution enters the ocean, posing a major threat to our ocean environment, coastal economy and even the food chain. Yet plastics cause pollution throughout their entire lifecycle, from extraction to production to disposal. Surfrider supports laws aimed at reducing sources of plastic pollution, e.g. easily littered single-use plastics. We also support prevention and response to ocean trash.

Support: Cosponsor Sen. Merkley and Rep. Lowenthal's *Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act*.

SUPPORT OCEAN CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Coastal communities, our nation's infrastructure and marine ecosystems are increasingly threatened by sea level rise, extreme weather events, ocean warming and acidification. Bold federal leadership is needed to pass Ocean Climate Solutions legislation that will ban new offshore drilling, protect coastal and marine habitats, advance coastal adaptation and fund NOAA programs.

Support: Ocean Climate Solutions legislation such as Rep. Grijalva's *Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act*.

Support: Increased funding for NOAA in FY 2022 budget including Coastal Zone Management, Coastal Resilience, Sea Grant, and National Marine Sanctuaries programs.

About The Surfrider Foundation:

The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves and beaches for all people. Founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers, Surfrider's network includes over 170 volunteer chapters and student clubs, and over a million members and supporters.

For more information, visit go.surfrider.org/coastalhillday and surfrider.org



Fund Critical EPA Programs to Protect U.S. Beaches from Sewage Pollution

PROBLEM

Sewage spills and stormwater runoff are threatening the health of beachgoers and coastal ecosystems. Sewage spills and failing wastewater infrastructure impact coastal water quality by discharging raw and under-treated sewage into local waterways and the ocean. Sewage can contain bacteria, viruses and parasites that make people sick with gastrointestinal symptoms, rashes, flu-like symptoms, skin and eye infections and worse. Sewage discharges also pollute waterways with excess nutrients that wreak havoc on coastal ecosystems by fueling harmful algal blooms that put human health at risk, cause fish kills and smother coral reefs. This pollution also threatens our ocean and Great Lakes tourism and recreation economies that are valued at over \$129 billion annually and support 2.4 million jobs nationwide.



SOLUTION

Sufficient water quality monitoring is needed to protect public health and inform solutions, while significant investments are needed to repair, upgrade and ensure climate resiliency for America's failing water infrastructure. These federal dollars will also create jobs and provide long lasting benefits to the nation's economy.

Support: Appropriations of at least \$10 million for the EPA's BEACH Act Grants program to provide support for beach water quality monitoring and public notification programs in coastal states and territories.

Support: \$100 billion over 10 years for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund in an economic recovery/ infrastructure package to upgrade failing wastewater infrastructure and stop sewage spills at the source.

The American public deserves enjoyable and worry-free beach days. These federal investments will allow states to conduct essential upgrades to their wastewater infrastructure to improve water quality conditions and will provide families with the information they need to stay safe at the beach. Water infrastructure projects will also help put Americans back to work and protect our valuable coastal tourism-based economies.

Support Ocean Climate Solutions

PROBLEM

The climate crisis is greatly impacting our ocean, coasts and local communities. Extreme weather events, sea level rise, and ocean acidification are disrupting everything from community infrastructure to ocean recreation to ecosystem health. The ocean is at the mercy of climate change having absorbed nearly 30% of CO₂ emitted from burning fossil fuels and 90% of excess heat trapped in the atmosphere. In addition, warming water temperatures are increasing harmful algae blooms, resulting in damage to marine life, closed beaches, and human illness. Without meaningful climate action, impacts will only become more destructive and costly.



SOLUTION

Surfrider calls upon Congress to act NOW on climate crisis solutions.

Support: Ocean Climate Solutions legislation such as Rep. Grijalva's *Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act*.

We need legislation that leverage the ocean's potential in the fight against climate change. Congress must take bold steps to implement long-standing solutions by focusing on these critical issues:

Enhance Coastal Resilience: Congress must help coastal communities prepare and respond to climate change impacts by passing legislation that invests in climate adaptation, resiliency planning, coastal restoration, and natural infrastructure programs.

Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG): Congress must enact legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, end fossil fuel subsidies, and transition to renewable energy sources, including well-planned and sited offshore renewables. An imperative step includes a permanent ban on new offshore oil gas development in the outer continental shelf.

Advance Climate Justice: Congress must ensure climate change planning is just, equitable and respects diversity. Legislation should protect communities and work with them to transition away from fossil fuels and create good-paying jobs that benefit every American community.

Protect Critical Habitat and Blue Carbon: Congress must prevent the most severe impacts of climate change by protecting and restoring at least 30% of the nation's coastal and marine ecosystems by 2030, especially habitats like mangroves and seagrass that sequester and store carbon dioxide emissions.

Pass the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act

PROBLEM

Plastic pollution is a grave environmental problem that threatens coastal economies and the health of marine ecosystems, including critical components of the food chain. Surfrider supports laws aimed at reducing sources of plastic pollution, including prohibition of easily littered single-use plastics, such as plastic bags, straws and polystyrene foam. Surfrider also supports prevention and response to ocean trash and funding for agencies and efforts that address marine plastic pollution. In 2019, the Surfrider Foundation and the UCLA Environmental Law Clinic participated in two [Congressional Briefings](#) on Capitol Hill to present their [Briefing Booklet](#) on plastic pollution solutions. Additionally, the Surfrider Foundation has met with federal lawmakers and was influential in developing the landmark *Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act*.



SOLUTION

Surfrider calls upon Congress to sponsor and pass the following legislation to address the plastic pollution crisis that is affecting our environment and coastal economies.

Support: The *Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act*, which will be reintroduced by Sen. Merkley and Rep Lowenthal, to tackle the plastic waste crisis through actions to reduce the source of plastic pollution. Components of this legislation include:

- Require producers of packaging, containers, and food-service products to design, manage, and finance waste and recycling programs.
- Create a nationwide beverage container refund program.
- Ban certain single-use plastic products that are not recyclable.
- Ban single-use plastic carryout bags and place fee on the distribution of remaining carryout bags.
- Establish minimum recycled content requirements for beverage containers, packaging, and food-service products.
- Spur massive investments in U.S. domestic recycling and composting infrastructure.
- Prohibit plastic waste from being shipped or re-shipped to developing countries.
- Protect state and local governments that enact more stringent standards.
- Place a temporary pause on new plastic facilities until EPA updates and creates important regulations on those facilities.
- Prohibits toxic chemicals from being included in compostable products and other covered products.
- Addresses microfiber and microplastic pollution, including funding for pilot programs for removal and prevention of microplastic pollution.