

U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Murkowski: Bipartisan bill to protect our shoreline communities passes out of Senate

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) announced her *Digital Coast Act* passed out of the Senate. This bipartisan bill, which is co-led by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), will help coastal communities better prepare for storms, cope with varying water levels, and plan for future economic development. The bill reauthorizes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Digital Coast Program, which Baldwin and Murkowski previously spearheaded efforts to reestablish the program in 2020.

“Wisconsin is defined by our waters, from the Mighty Mississippi to our Great Lakes which have shaped our coastal communities, our economy, and our way of life. I’m committed to protecting these resources and giving the communities that rely on them the tools to confront the challenges they face,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “I’m proud to lead this bipartisan legislation that will help Wisconsin’s coastal communities prepare for disaster, keep our waters clean and safe, and help us plan for the future.”

“As we confront the escalating impacts of climate change, it is crucial our coastal communities remain equipped with the tools and data they need to adapt and thrive,” **said Senator Murkowski.** “The Digital Coast Program has proven to be a vital resource in this effort, providing essential information and support for our local leaders to make informed decisions.”

NOAA currently assembles and hosts the Digital Coast Project, a collaborative online

database of the most up-to-date coastal information and makes it available to both the public and private sectors. Digital Coast also provides tools for coastal communities to decipher and use the high-tech mapping data to make accurate decisions and smart investments in coastal communities.

The *Digital Coast Act* reauthorizes the program and ensures that communities will continue to have the data to make smart choices for economic development, shoreline management, and coastal restoration. The bill supports further development of the current project, including increasing access to uniform, up-to-date data, to help communities get the coastal data they need to respond to emergencies, plan for long-term coastal resilience, and manage their water resources.

Companion legislation in the U.S. House by Representatives has also advanced out of the House Committee on Natural Resources, teeing it up for a vote. The legislation is endorsed by Coastal States Organization, American Planning Association, Association of State Floodplain Managers, National Association of Counties, National Society of Professional Surveyors, U.S. Geospatial Executives Organization (U.S. GEO), Surfrider Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, National States Geographic Information Council, National Estuarine Research Reserve Association, Quantum Spatial Inc., Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors, and Digital Coast Partnership Advocacy Coalition.