

May 21, 2024

Dear Coastal Council,

Three weeks ago, I hit “submit” on our cooperative agreement for 2024. There was instant relief as I did so because this year had multiple challenges. We encountered everything from receiving our allocation amount after our agreement was (supposed to be) due to navigating a new grant management system.

As the days have passed, relief has changed into excitement – excitement about lies ahead of us for the year, which starts August 1. There’s so much to look forward to including:

- Celebrating the Coastal Program’s 25th anniversary.
- Completing our first Section 309 Assessment and Strategy in almost 10 years.
- Welcoming NOAA to Minnesota for our 312 Evaluation.
- Bringing Indigenous voices into the coastal places and spaces we all enjoy.

It’s not all about the new though. Equally exciting is the continuation of work to:

- Advance climate change awareness, preparedness, and planning.
- Integrate the use of spatial and geographic data and relevant tools into the operations and decisions of partners and collaborators.
- Manage a grant program that provides financial assistance to outside entities for coastal management.
- Administer the state’s annual award and manage the day-to-day operations of the program.

As you can see, we have a tremendous body of work laid out before us. Plus, there’s still some work in older awards that we need to complete. Adding to matters are once-in-a generation opportunities through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act that we intend to capitalize on. It’s going to take our entire team to keep all these wheels moving in sync.

I wish to close with a shout out to the amazing team that undoubtedly will keep everything moving smoothly. Clint, Cynthia, Julie, and Marcia give their best day in and day out. Because of them, the coastal area is more healthy, resilient, and sustainable.

And I give a shout out to you, our council members. You helped us lay out this body of work during a very unusual year. You’re coming together on the 29th to shape our grant offerings for 2024. And looking ahead, we will lean on you to review Annual and STAR grant applications (yes, we’re planning for them to return this year). Thank you for your ongoing contributions!

Here’s to a great year ahead.

Best,
Amber