

March 11, 2025

Dear Coastal Council,

If you've been following the news, you know that there has been a lot of activity in the federal government. There are several things we're watching closely.

- *Loss of NOAA employees:* In late February, NOAA fired hundreds of employees on probationary status, including weather forecasters and a few of the staff we work with on projects. News outlets are saying we can expect more cuts as agencies are asked how they can reduce their budgets.
- *New bill introduced in the House:* Early last week, Representative Kiley (R-CA) introduced the "Coastal Commission Accountability Act". According to the Coastal States Organization, the legislation effectively eliminates the coastal states' rights to review federal actions under the Coastal Zone Management Act.
- *Continuing resolution expiration:* This Friday, March 14, the current continuing resolution funding the federal government expires. If Congress fails to pass a budget or another continuing resolution, the federal government will shut down. As we are currently waiting on post-award actions and putting our 2025 Cooperative Agreement together, this is concerning.

When a lot starts hitting me all at once, I find comfort in identifying the things that are a constant. For our program, it's our commitment and dedication to people and place.

I find comfort knowing that throughout our communities and agencies, there are hundreds of people successfully managing our coastal resources every day. They're out on the ground protecting water quality; reducing flooding and erosion risk; conserving and restoring streams, forests, and wetlands; building and enhancing public access locations; and ensuring our communities are growing sustainably and with resilience in mind. We are fortunate as a program to empower and support them along the way. It is both humbling and gratifying to be able to make such a difference.

And we're making that difference in the most special of places. Sometimes I get so wrapped up in my life that I forget how lucky I am to live, work and play along the shores of Lake Superior. Thankfully, the water is only minutes away for me, and I can make that reconnection that is so important. A drive in any direction will yield not only spectacular views, but a chance to see Coastal Program projects and influences at sites throughout the area. In our 25 years, we've touched every community in our coastal area with some kind of project or technical assistance. The coastal area is truly better because of our on-going work.

You're a big part of the work we do. Your commitment to people and place is equally strong given your willingness to serve without an appointment. You are yet another reason for me to be thankful during these seemingly wild times. May you find comfort too in the lake and all that you are doing here and now.

Best,
Amber