

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2022

The Honorable Richard W. Spinrad, Ph.D.
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Administrator Spinrad,

I write to express my appreciation for your agency's hard work and partnership with communities across Connecticut as you continue to implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) and begin to implement the Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169). The funding your agency has made available for shovel-ready projects that protects coasts, improves water quality, and supports shoreline communities is already making a difference in my state. However, as additional grant rounds are disbursed and NOAA uses new authorities and funding in the coming months and years, I want to share three pieces of feedback I have received from stakeholders across our state in the hopes of further improving NOAA's implementation of these important pieces of legislation.

- **Application Timelines:** When awarding future IJIA and IRA funding, I would encourage your agency to extend application windows to allow potential recipients to prepare the strongest possible applications, ensuring the projects NOAA eventually funds will be more impactful and shovel-ready. Throughout Connecticut there is a clear need and appetite for additional funds to protect coastlines and restore natural habitats. But many entities across Connecticut need technical assistance refining project proposals into competitive federal grant applications.
- **Research and Data:** While we must understandably prioritize projects that protect human life, property, and natural habitats, we should not ignore funding for research, data, and evaluation. Funding for these activities will be critical to identifying the areas of greatest need, pinpointing the most effective project designs, and promoting best practices. Without that information, we risk undermining our shared policy goals.
- **Capacity Building:** Finally, NOAA should emphasize and fund capacity building and planning activities in future years. This should include increasing capacity of state agencies through Coastal Zone Management Programs to implement projects and provide technical assistance to towns and non-profits. It should also include increases to Sea Grant, National Estuarine Research Reserves, institutions of higher education, and other similar non-profit entities. Funding this capacity will better help states and towns

implement these new investments and bring about the policy changes envisioned in these bills.

I appreciate your consideration of these perspectives and your agency's ongoing partnership. The activities and projects funded through both the IJA and the IRA will help protect our coasts, support fisheries, and improve water quality for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Murphy", is positioned above the printed name.

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator