

**June 11, 2025, Meeting of the  
Coastal Zone Advisory Committee**

The regular meeting of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC) was called to order at 9:30 a.m. This meeting was held in hybrid format, provided both in-person in RCSOB Room 105 and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

**The following committee representatives were in attendance:**

Stacey Box	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Coastal Resources Management Program (CRMP)
Rachael Hersh	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)
Brenda Stouffer	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
Bradley Holcomb	Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC)
Joy Fronzoli	PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
Cindy Dunlap	PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

**The following agency representatives (non-CZAC members) were in attendance:**

Amani Reid	DEP, CRMP
J. Samantha Burton	DEP, CRMP
Randy Brown	DEP, CRMP
Amelia Czwalina	DEP, CRMP
Matthew Walderon	DEP, CRMP
Shane Gutsie	DEP, CRMP
Emily Ashberry	DEP, CRMP
Shelby Clark	DEP, CRMP
Austin Grace	DEP, Bureau of Regulatory Counsel
Jack Palumbo	DEP, Policy Office
Brian Chalfant	DEP, Policy Office
Michelle Homan	DEP, Environmental Toxicologist
Trent Machamer	Pennsylvania Senate
Erin Wiley Moyers	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Alexandra Royal	Erie County Dept. of Planning and Community Development
Mel Musie	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
Amy Verbofsky	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
Thomas Hughes	Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Sarah Niles Whitney	Pennsylvania Sea Grant

**I. Introductions**

Stacey Box began the meeting at 9:30 a.m., welcomed attendees and led the introductions.

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### **II. Review and Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the January 15, 2025, were not approved as there was not a quorum at this time.

### **III. Coastal Resources Management Grant Program, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Updates**

Since the last CZAC meeting, the 2024 Coastal Zone grants were announced. Over \$740,000 was distributed to seventeen projects. Press releases announcing the grants are available for review if interested.

CRMP has submitted a draft application to NOAA for Fiscal Year 2025 funding for Sections 306 and 309 and will be submitting a final application by the end of the month. 25 applications for the Coastal Zone grant program were received, reviewed, and scored, and a list of recommended projects will be included as part of the application. CRMP is awaiting notification of final funding amounts from NOAA and will then adjust our application budget if necessary.

The 2026 Coastal Zone grant program is currently being reviewed for approval to announce by the Department. The application round is tentatively set to open on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and close on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025. More information will be released publicly in the near future.

Before Ms. Box provided BIL and IRA updates, she introduced the newest member of the Coastal Program, Amani Reid. Ms. Reid's responsibilities will include managing special funding opportunities and coordinating community engagement in the Coastal Zones.

Work under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding will begin in earnest now that Ms. Reid is with the Program. CRMP will work with a contractor to update the National Wetlands Inventory in the Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone with these funds.

CRMP has also begun work using the Inflation Reduction Act funds. The Program is contracting with Penn State University who will work with Woolpert to collect and analyze data about the Lake Erie bluffs.

### **IV. Section 309 Strategy Update**

CRMP has submitted the 2026 - 2031 Section 309 Assessment and Strategy through the chain of command for review. The document is now being reviewed by legal, where we anticipate another round of comments to address. Once that has been completed, the Draft Section 309 document will be submitted to the PA Bulletin for a 15-day public comment period, as well as to NOAA for their review (concurrent to the PA Bulletin notice). Normally NOAA will submit comments from this initial review, which will be

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addressed along with any comments from the public. Upon making the final edits, the final Section 309 Assessment and Strategy will be sent to NOAA for final review and approval.

The draft strategy for the upcoming 309 involves two projects - one in each coastal zone. For the Delaware Estuary, CRMP is proposing to study the viability of creating a shellfish contribution fund for Pennsylvania to offset impacts to freshwater mussel habitat. The strategy for Lake Erie's Coastal Zone consists of assessing and modernizing the management of Pennsylvania's Lake Erie bluffs.

We are also in the process of closing out the previous Section 309. That 309 was divided into two strategies as well - one for the DECZ and one for the LECZ. The DECZ strategy involved a proposed boundary expansion project, which was eventually abandoned due to a change in administration priorities. The other portion involved partnering with the DVRPC "build capacity to facilitate climate adaptation planning and community resilience." DVRPC staff conducted background research on the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program and existing stormwater collaboratives in Pennsylvania.

### **V. Local Coastal Zone Updates**

#### **Lake Erie Coastal Zone Update:**

Ms. Royal presented updates on developments to the Erie Bayfront, including street improvements and trails. She then shared local planning efforts;

- The Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority (EWPPA) took possession of the Erie Coke site in 2024 and has begun the redevelopment process on the property. EWPPA completed dredging at the East Avenue Boat Launch and recently relaunched the Presque Isle Water taxi.
- The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail planning efforts continue.
- The Great Lakes Seaway Trail development is underway.
- Students from the University of Michigan have begun the process of scoping Erie County for the first segment of the US Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. The students visited Erie County over the summer to see the area for themselves and to be public outreach and participation for the project.
- Planning for the Erie County International Coastal Cleanup is underway. The event will be held on September 20, 2025.

Ms. Royal closed her presentation with information on some recently-completed Coastal Zone Grant Projects, including Harmful Algal Bloom research, bird migration research and an innovative recycling project that incorporates art into the design.

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### **Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone Update:**

Ms. Musie provided updates on trail developments, funding news, waterfront development, recently published studies/tools and honors for the Delaware River.

- Trail development news included the one-year closure of the Bartram's Mile Trail due to a chromium leak at an adjacent property, the imminent construction of the Washington Avenue Connector, and new art installations along the Cobbs Creek Trail.
- Many trails in the Coastal Zone received funding, including the Port Richmond Industrial District and Waterfront, 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Grays Ferry, and the D&L Trail.
- Several federal grants were terminated or placed on hold, including projects at Bartram's Garden and Eastwick.
- A variety of large waterfront development projects are proposed for Philadelphia's waterfront.
- The Delaware River was named 2025 River of the Year.

### **VI. PFAS - An overview of Forever Chemicals Presentation**

Ms. Homan shared a presentation on PFAS, its history, sources, uses, health effects, behavior in the environment and regulations.

### **VII. Agency Updates**

Ms. Dunlap, with DCNR, shared that their Region 6 Advisor role is currently vacant, and they are looking to fill the position soon. The C2P2 Program received 425 grant applications for approximately \$1.25m in funding. Awards will be announced in the fall of 2025. Ms. Dunlap noted that the C2P2 grant program criteria are being overhauled, although not likely to be in place for Round 32 this fall. A grant workshop is tentatively scheduled for November.

Ms. Fronzoli, with DCED, shared that the Governor's Center for Local Government Services conducted a 5-year land-use study at the county and municipal level. She also shared that their Municipal Assistance Program will likely have a spring 2026 award announcement. Funds can be used for land-use studies, comprehensive plans, and functional plans for greenway improvements.

Ms. Wiley-Moyers, representing PennDOT, said that PennDOT is currently updating publications.

Mr. Holcomb, with the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), noted that PGC will complete management plans for State Game Lands 314 by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Hughes, from PEMA, mentioned several updates including National Flood Insurance Program roadshows to highlight flood plain management, Federal Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities funding for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 has been either

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rescinded or cancelled, and PEMA continues to offer direct technical assistance, the pre-disaster recovery program and the state hazard mitigation plan.

### **VIII. Public Comment**

Ms. Niles-Whitney, PA Sea Grant, shared that Sea Grant developed a national “Sign-on” letter for partners to show support for Sea Grant and the work they contribute to environmental causes. To date, 600 people had signed the letter from Pennsylvania.

### **IX. Other Business**

### **X. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.