

July 20, 2022

Senator Joe Manchin III
Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources

Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso,

The undersigned organizations write in support of the Reinvesting in America's Shoreline Economies & Ecosystems Act (RISEE Act, S. 2130) and thank the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for including this bill in the July 21, 2022, committee markup.

Outdoor recreation is a powerful force in the American economy. Prior to the pandemic, the outdoor industry, led by hunting, fishing, and boating generated \$778 billion in economic output, comprised 2.2 percent of U.S. Gross Domestic Product and supported 5.2 million jobs. Additionally, a recent joint report by the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that recreation and tourism are the top contributors to the significant economic footprint of the nation's oceans and Great Lakes. The Covid-19 pandemic renewed enthusiasm for Americans to return to the outdoors and engage in healthy activities like recreational boating, angling, and hunting, all of which are important to the American System of Conservation Funding through their contributions to the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. Sales of boats, tackle, gear, and licenses have all been on the rise, and to keep this recreation economic engine churning, the time is right for investments in coastal restoration and resiliency-building activities.

As coastal communities continue to endure stronger and more frequent natural disasters, we cannot stress enough the importance of healthy, hardened coastlines and protected aquatic ecosystems towards growing the outdoor recreation sector and making our nation and economy more resilient in the face of disaster.

Our organizations support the RISEE Act to diversify federal conservation funding by dedicating a portion of offshore wind revenue to coastal resiliency investments. These funds would be directed to adjacent states to be used for projects such as coastal resiliency, wetland restoration, hurricane protection, and infrastructure improvements to protect fish, wildlife, and other natural resources. Small businesses in rural, vulnerable areas often face the brunt of natural disasters and depend on robust, resilient infrastructure to be able to make a living. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, roughly 40-60 percent of small businesses never reopen following a disaster. The damages from natural disasters on businesses and vulnerable communities shine a light on the need to utilize untapped

resources, such as the nation's vast offshore wind energy development revenues, to supplement federal and state efforts to protect coastal economies and natural resources.

Our organizations also support amending the Gulf of Mexico Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA) to dedicate more of the existing offshore energy production revenue from the Gulf to support regional coastal restoration and resiliency. Specifically, we support lifting the cap on currently shared revenues as well as lifting the \$125 million state-side funding cap on the Land and Water Conservation Fund. These changes allow for more equitable resource sharing between the states and federal conservation programs. This additional funding would facilitate critical investments in environmental protections and resilient infrastructure projects in vulnerable communities threatened by sea level rise, coastal erosion, and flooding. It is more important now than ever before to ensure communities are prepared and well equipped to bounce back from extreme weather events as their homes, businesses, and lives lay in the path of increasingly dangerous and costly storms.

We urge the committee to favorably report this important legislation that will ensure critical environmental protections and infrastructure needs are met to better prepare and protect the nation's coastlines from the effects of our rapidly changing environment. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
Bonefish and Tarpon Trust
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Cc: The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
The Honorable Bill Cassidy