May 21, 2018

The Hon. John Thune
Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee

The Hon. Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Committee

The Hon. Dan Sullivan
Chair, Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard

The Hon. Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard

Dear Senators Thune, Nelson, Sullivan and Baldwin:

I am writing on behalf of the American Planning Association (APA) to express support for the Coastal Communities Adaptation Act (S. 2783). This legislation would provide critical financing for a range of coastal resiliency plans and projects through the proven state revolving loan fund model. APA members are working each day in coastal areas to develop plans and infrastructure that guard people and property from increasing coastal risks while also building thriving communities and economies. This approach to resiliency is essential to the future of our coastal communities. Federal funding and finance to conduct new planning and implement new resiliency strategies is essential.

Communities across the country are taking bold new planning approaches in response to changing coastal conditions and increasing hazard challenges. In response to devastating storms in recent years, the U.S. has seen a dramatic evolution in local planning for water and coastal areas. What was once a niche planning effort to limit storm damage is now a broad-based effort to integrate hazard planning and water or coastal management into all aspects of local comprehensive plans and related development codes. Resiliency planning is now a fundamental part of how communities plan and grow.

We know from recent experience that no coastal community is immune. Places large and small across the U.S. are actively re-evaluating their vision for future development and making critical plans for how to manage their coasts and all the resulting implications for housing, mobility and the economy. While the benefits to resiliency planning and mitigation projects are well-known and consistently demonstrate a positive economic return, it is often challenging for local jurisdictions to fully implement key resiliency initiatives and projects. This fact makes federal grants and financing so critical.

This legislation would provide a new financing tool to support a wide range of projects and plans aimed at helping communities adapt and respond to new coastal realities. There have rightly been bipartisan calls for new infrastructure investment. Coastal community resiliency is critical.
infrastructure. The financing tools provided in S. 2783 will help communities turn resiliency plans into a safer, more prosperous reality.

APA urges the Senate Commerce Committee to advance this important coastal legislation. We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to support the tools communities need for a more resilient future.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Bowen, AICP
President, American Planning Association