The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services
Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

October 19, 2026

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Authorize the Department of Environmental Services to **RETROACTIVELY** pay membership dues to the Coastal States Organization (VC #170810-B001), Washington, DC, in the amount of $9,242, for the period July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, upon Governor and Council approval. 100% Federal Funds.

Funding is available in the following account.

	FY 2027
03-44-44-442010-3642-026-500251	$9,242
Dept. Environmental Services, Coastal Zone Management, Dues	

EXPLANATION

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Coastal Program has been a member of the Coastal States Organization (CSO) for over 25 years. CSO is a professional organization formed in 1970 to address a growing need for state coastal program managers to have national representation. Membership provides New Hampshire with an avenue to receive timely information on new developments and to have a voice in the discussion of important issues affecting the State's coastal waters, especially federal funding issues. This request is **RETROACTIVE** because the payment was dependent on federal funding that was delayed.

Listed below are answers to standard questions required for Governor and Council organization dues and membership approval submissions:

1. **How long has this organization been in existence and how long has this agency been a member of this organization?**
   The CSO was established in 1970 and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program has been a member of CSO for over 25 years.

2. **Is there any other organization that provides the same or similar benefits which your agency belongs to?**
   No, CSO is unique in that it represents the coastal states, commonwealths and territories on legislative and policy issues relating to the sound management of coastal, Great Lakes and ocean resources.

3. **How many other states belong to this organization and is your agency the sole New Hampshire state agency that is a member?**
   CSO has 34 member states (including NH) and DES is the sole NH state agency that is a member.

4. **How is the dues structure established?**
   CSO dues structure is based on the same formula used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to determine annual federal funding for New Hampshire's implementation of the Coastal Zone Management Act. Shoreline mileage and population are the primary criteria in the NOAA formula.

5. **What benefit does the state receive from participating in this membership?**
   CSO serves as an advocate to assure that the authority and role of the states is recognized and preserved in federal legislation, regulation and policy. CSO was formed by the National Governor's Association. CSO's principal activities include:
   a. Keeping Congress informed on key issues related to the coast, including appropriations;
   b. Liaising with NOAA on funding and program administration;
   c. Representing states on the upcoming reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act;
   d. Publications and technical documents on coastal related issues;
   e. Providing expertise in coastal and estuarine law and policy.

   Specific example of recent benefits include the following:
   a. Securing NOAA level funding at base levels as part of the Federal Fiscal 2025 continuing resolution negotiations;
   b. Coordinating in person meetings with senior leadership from NOAA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management;
   c. Commenting on state concerns on proposed permitting changes by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

6. **Are training or educational/research materials included in the membership? If so, is the cost included?**
   CSO provides technical training opportunities to the states. The majority of the opportunities are made available as part of regularly scheduled meetings. The cost of these training opportunities is included in the membership.

7. **Is the membership required to receive any federal grants or required in order to receive or participate in licensing or certification exams?** No.

8. **Is there any travel included with this membership fee?** No.

9. **Which state agency employees are directly involved with this organization?**
   As designated by the Governor, NHDES Commissioner Robert R. Scott is a voting Delegate member and Coastal Program Administrator Steve Couture is an Alternate to the CSO. Either the delegate or alternate has voting privileges, though each state is allocated one vote.

10. **Explain in detail any negative impact to the state if the agency did not belong to this organization.** Without membership in the CSO, New Hampshire's ability to stay abreast of important coastal issues would be seriously impeded and our opportunity to provide the New Hampshire perspective on national environmental issues and policy would either be drastically reduced or entirely eliminated. The Coastal Program often discovers funding opportunities through its interaction with CSO staff and other state members; benefits that would not be available without membership. Importantly, CSO is the key to access senior leadership at NOAA.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

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http://www.coastalstates.org

Invoice

BILL TO
State of New Hampshire
Steven Couture
NH Dept Services
29 Hazen Dr.
Concord, NH 03301

INVOICE #	DATE	TOTAL DUE	DUE DATE	TERMS	ENCLOSED
2026 Dues 19	01/01/2026	$9,242.00	01/31/2026	Net 30	

DATE		DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
	DUES.CY	2026 Dues	9,242.00
		BALANCE DUE	**$9,242.00**

Pay invoice