

THE NEWS ROOM

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BOEMRE to Fund Clean-up of 400,000 Pounds of Debris from Alaska Coast

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) today announced it has awarded a \$988,000 Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) grant to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The grant will provide funding for the removal, from the state's coast, of more than 400,000 pounds of commercial fishing gear and other marine debris that has accumulated over time. The funding will be spread over two years.

Created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, CIAP provides funding to the six Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas producing states to conserve and protect the coastal environment. CIAP is an ongoing program with grant funding that is allocated based on the offshore energy revenues collected by the United States.

"Alaska's shores and coastal waters are among our most important and sensitive natural resources," said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. "We welcome the opportunity to work with the State of Alaska to restore some of these areas to their natural, pristine condition. CIAP projects like this serve as a reminder that a clean and healthy environment is an important legacy for us to leave to future generations."

The Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation (MCAF), a non-profit organization that specializes in coastal marine clean-up, will assist the Alaska Department of Natural Resources with the project. The Foundation works with a variety of local organizations, tribes and community groups to assess local conditions and remove marine and coastal debris. Grant funding will also support the maintenance and expansion of the Alaska Marine Debris Database, an online tool that tracks the location, amount and type of debris, allowing for more effective planning of future debris-removal operations.

"Since its founding in 2003, MCAF has removed more than two million pounds of refuse from Alaska's shores," said Merrick Burden, executive director of the Marine Conservation Alliance, MCAF's parent organization. "With this funding from BOEMRE, we can take another big step forward in protecting and preserving Alaska's delicate coastal ecosystems."

CIAP received \$250 million in appropriated funds for each of the Fiscal Years 2007-2010, to be disbursed to six eligible OCS oil and gas producing states: Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, California, Mississippi and Texas.

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