

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Mar 2, 2016 at 7:38 AM
Subject: Re: Letter supporting action to conserve of ERAs
To: "Capt. John McMurray" <john@nycflyfishing.com>
Cc: Robert LaBelle <Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov>, Gwynne Schultz <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, BOEM MidAtlanticRPB <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thank you for your letter to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body regarding the identification and conservation of ecologically rich areas. The MidA RPB will consider all input received, and will post your message on the written public comments section of the MidA RPB website.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have, and please check the MidA RPB website (<http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/>) for information and updates. We also encourage you to attend the MidA RPB meeting and workshop in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 22-24.

On Tue, Mar 1, 2016 at 4:53 AM, Capt. John McMurray <john@nycflyfishing.com> wrote:
Please see attached letter. Should you have any questions please contact me at the following address. Thanks!

Capt. John McMurray
john@nycflyfishing.com
2887 Alfred Ct
Oceanside, NY 11572

February 29, 2016

Mr. Robert LaBelle
Senior Advisor to the Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Ms. Kelsey Leonard
Shinnecock Indian Nation
P.O. Box 5006
Southampton, New York 11969

Ms. Gwynne Schultz
Senior Coastal and Ocean Policy Advisor
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue, E2
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. LaBelle, Ms. Schultz, and Ms. Leonard:

We, members of the recreational fishing public, believe that some offshore places, whether due to their habitat, structure or the marine life that uses the area, are simply more valuable than others in terms of how the ocean functions. These places need to be given heightened consideration before siting and other development decisions are made in order to ensure the long-term health of the region's fish and shellfish. Because of this, we wish to convey our support for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's (MARCO) work to identify ecologically rich areas (ERAs) and to encourage the federal and state agencies serving on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) to act within their existing authorities to conserve these places, which are so critical to the future of our fisheries. We are seeing growing threats to fisheries in a developing ocean, especially with increased demands for offshore energy development and the disruption of habitat by sand extraction. Good ocean planning can identify key ecological areas; areas that need protection through planning, regulatory and management decisions by federal and state agencies.

Recently, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) acknowledged the importance of habitat protection through unanimous passage of policies on non-fishing activities that impact fish habitat. The preamble calls on agencies to help protect sensitive habitat, noting that "[a]ctions and policies that protect and restore fish habitat and marine and estuarine ecosystem function, are clearly an investment in the health of our coastal communities, and the fisheries on which they depend."¹ The Council recognizes that beyond developing fishery regulations and making recommendations to agencies that regulate offshore uses, it is limited in its ability to address threats to ocean habitat.

Therefore, it is critical that federal and state agencies that do have the authority to regulate non-fishing activities pledge to use their existing authorities to conserve our ecologically important

¹ [Policies on Non-Fishing Activities and Projects that Impact Fish Habitat at 2.](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/511cdc7fe4b00307a2628ac6/t/56c4cac42fe131b524a95387/1455737546729/HabPolicies-Combined.pdf) Available at <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/511cdc7fe4b00307a2628ac6/t/56c4cac42fe131b524a95387/1455737546729/HabPolicies-Combined.pdf>.

places, such as those identified through the MARCO process. We urge agencies like the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to ensure that actions that they oversee like offshore wind power facility siting and development and sand and gravel mining take into account the value of the identified ERAs and conserve the ecological functions that make these areas important.

We see an increasing amount of ocean use, with decisions made every day about where and how to develop our oceans. Therefore, action to conserve ERAs must be taken now, with all parties committed to continued data collection and ERA refinement. Thank you in advance for your commitment to safeguard these important places for our future use and enjoyment.

Sincerely,

Jeff Deem
Recreational Fishing Representative, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Stakeholder Liaison Committee

John McMurray
Captain, Charter Boat Operator, New York
Recreational Fishing Representative, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Stakeholder Liaison Committee

Charles A. Witek, III

Timothy Adkins
Chicago, IL

Louis J. DeRicco
Maspeth, NY

José Bacallao
Santa Monica, CA

Capt. Paul Dixon
East Hampton, NY

Art Berkman, NJ

Gerard Doyle
Lindenhurst, NY

Jason Bishop
Waterford, CT

John Durante
Breezy Point, NY

Chris Brown
Nantucket, MA

Mark Dysinger
Killingworth, CT

Ralph Cipolla
Point Pleasant, NJ

Capt. Paul Eidman
Anglers Conservation Network
Tinton Falls, NJ

Ken Courtlangus
Levittown, NY

Dr. Chris Elkins
Gloucester, NC

Louis Falsetta
North Babylon, NY

Anthony Grassi
Brick, NJ

Linda Hanna
Solomons, MD

Jeff Hardimon
Jenkintown, PA

Capt. Bill Hoblitzell
Belmar, NJ

Bogdan Ilisie
New York, NY

Taylor Ingraham
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Rich King
Millsboro, DE

Andrew Koslow
Easton, MD

Bill Lattrell
Heath, MA

Cody Lapnow
Newport News, VA

Theresa Labriola
Mosier, OR

Al Lescius
Plainview, NY

Dennis McKay
Munford, AL

Carolyn McMurray
Long Beach, NY

Gerald McMurray
Arlington, VT

Rex Messing
Ridgefield, CT

Robert Moore
Manchester, NJ

Greg O'Driscoll
Sewell, NJ

Brendan Nelson
New York, NY

Timothy O'Brien, Ph.D.
Waynesboro, VA

Ryan Oppenheimer
Port Murray, NJ

Kelly Oreilly
Reston, VA

Mark Philippe
Burlington, CT

David Price
Bayville, NJ

Kenneth Rafferty
East Hampton, NY

Mike Rice
Marshfield, MA

Robert Rifchin
Barnstable, MA

Joe Sagarese
Rockville Centre, NY

T. Mark Seymour
Leverett, MA

Wesley Tower
Annapolis, MD

Elias Vaisberg
Brooklyn, NY

Layne Wagner
Long Beach, NY

Jonathan Walker
New York, NY

Kenneth F. Warchal
Point Pleasant, NJ

Jeff Weiss
Nutley, NJ

John West
New Hampton, NY

Ted Williams
Grafton, MA

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Mar 2, 2016 at 4:05 PM
Subject: Re: MARCO
To: KMWarchal@aol.com, Gwynne Schultz -DNR- <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>
Cc: "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, Robert LaBelle <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>

Thank you for sharing the letter to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body co-leads from the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. The RPB will consider all input received, and will post your message on the written public comments section of the RPB website.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have, and please check the RPB website (<http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/>) for information and updates. We also encourage you to attend the RPB meeting and workshop in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 22-24.

On Wed, Mar 2, 2016 at 2:34 PM, Gwynne Schultz -DNR- <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov> wrote:
On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) Co-leads, I am forwarding the attached letter to be shared with the full RPB

Thank you.
Gwynne

Gwynne Schultz
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue - E2
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
[410-260-8735](tel:410-260-8735)
Please note new email address: gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <KMWarchal@aol.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 2, 2016 at 1:48 PM
Subject: MARCO
To: robert.labelle@boem.gov, gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov, kelseyleonard@shinnecock.org, michael.luisi@maryland.gov
Cc: tim@littoralsociety.org, lyndie@littoralsociety.org, sradossi@verizon.net, tfote@jcaa.org, tothjohn@verizon.net

All,

Please see attached letter from the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Best regards,

Ken Warchal, VP
JCCA

Jersey Coast Anglers Association

Working for Marine Recreational Anglers

1594 Lakewood Road, Unit 13, Toms River, NJ 08755

TEL.: 732-506-6565 - FAX: 732-506-6975



March 2, 2016

Dear Mr. LaBella, Ms. Schultz, Ms. Leonard and Mr. Luisi,

Jersey Coast Anglers Association is an association of saltwater fishing clubs located in New Jersey whose membership consists of thousands of recreational anglers. We are very concerned with the current practices involving sand mining to build dunes and replenish beaches. There are several ongoing projects in New Jersey and more in the planning stage. One project in particular, the Manasquan Inlet to Barnegat inlet Storm Reduction Project is scheduled to begin once the necessary beach property easements have been obtained. This particular project involves the sand mining of five lumps, two of which are designated as "Prime Fishing Areas", within the Coastal Zone Management Rules. All five lumps are structures having great importance as essential marine habitat.

There will be increasing demand for sand in the future. We are afraid that, without a solid planning structure, other prime fishing areas and essential marine habitat will be damaged or lost completely.

We support the Mid Atlantic Regional Council on the Oceans work in identifying essential marine habitat. We encourage federal and state agencies serving on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body to work towards protecting important marine habitat such as these and especially the "Prime Fishing Areas". With proper planning, alternative locations can be utilized to spare these areas of critical importance.

We you also ask that you consider a plan for mitigation of areas that have been or will be diminished or destroyed by sand mining projects. The building of artificial reefs or depositing of low lying materials as replacement habitat may be options worthy of evaluation.

Respectfully yours.

Kenneth F. Warchal, V.P.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Mar 25, 2016 at 8:47 AM
Subject: Re: RPB Comment
To: "Firestone, Jeremy Mark" <jf@udel.edu>

Thank you for attending the MidA RPB's meeting in Baltimore and for providing comments during the public comment session, and for submitting these written comments. The MidA RPB will consider all comments received, and will post them on our website.

Please continue to contact us with any additional input, and check the website (<http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/>) for information and updates in the coming weeks.

On Fri, Mar 25, 2016 at 8:21 AM, Firestone, Jeremy Mark <jf@udel.edu> wrote:
Please find attached, the written basis from which my oral comment of March 24, 2016 was drawn.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Firestone

Jeremy Firestone
Professor, College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment
Director, Center for Carbon-free Power Integration
373 ISE Lab
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Newark, DE, USA 19716
1.302.831.0228 (landline)
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www.ceoe.udel.edu/windpower
www.carbonfree.udel.edu

Comment of Jeremy Firestone, Professor, University of Delaware, March 24, 2016

Today there was discussion of action items under the objectives. The problem however is not with the action items, but with the objectives. This is supposed to be an integrated plan, but the objectives are sectoral in nature. The Board spoke earlier this morning of best practices, but the objectives tend toward the opposite direction. Not only are the objectives sectoral but, taking three examples, we see they are also inwardly focused. It is as if we were in the pre-season rather than in the stretch run.

- DOD's contribution to an integrated plan is for others to "account for national security interests";
- NOAA/MAFMC's contribution toward collaboration is to help the rest of us understand the needs of fishers and fishing communities; and
- From the perspective of the Maritime Administration, a collaborative plan objective is one in which the rest of the users and uses of the marine environment need to better appreciate maritime commerce's contribution to the regional economy, as if we did not already know that maritime commerce had economic effects.

To paraphrase President Kennedy, **these agencies should ask not what the other uses and users of the ocean can do for them, but instead ask what they can do for the other uses and users. That is what integrated, stewardship entails.** One of the most important aspects of this endeavor are the relationships you have built. What you have produced so far however does not do justice to what you have accomplished.

I do appreciate the concern that the 2016 plan may not have the level of detail and specificity that some of may desire. If that is true, it suggests that it is more important than ever that **the plan be grounded in a mission statement and norms of behavior** and that it include criteria for future decision-making and provide a prioritized research agenda. As well, it should include a **five-year stocktaking**, as the plan should be living and breathing. I understand that this planning body has a mission statement and that there may even be a mission statement related to the plan, but you have each learned things from one another and the public since those were put down on paper and it is now time for a new mission statement.

There is no organic act for the oceans but as I wrote this I started with the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, which seems appropriate given its centennial, and modified and built from there. And while I understand you are assembling best practices, principles have normative effect and therefore would be useful. I recommend that the Plan open with the mission statement and principles.

Caveat: I worked on this primarily on day 2 of your meeting while I was back in Delaware preparing for class. As such, it likely requires additional reflection and consideration to get to a final draft, but as is, it does reflect generally what in my judgment would be a large step forward and toward an integrated, regional ocean plan.

Article 1. Mission Statement

The marine spatial plan for the Mid-Atlantic shall be implemented in accordance with a stewardship ethic by such means and measures as to conform to the fundamental purposes of the mid-Atlantic coastal and ocean region, which purposes are to (a) maintain and enhance a healthy and resilient ocean ecosystem; (b) conserve the natural and historical objects and the wildlife therein so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations; (c) provide sustainable provisioning services, including, but not limited to, energy, sand, food, transportation, and national security; and (d) provide cultural services, including, but not limited to, recreation and the conservation of cultural objects and heritage.

While recognizing that each agency, state and Indian Tribe has its own individual mandate, role, and responsibility, it is also recognized that the sum is greater than the parts and that in implementing such individual mandate, role or responsibility, the common good, prosperity, well-being and stewardship necessitates that each such entity take into consideration and mainstream into its decision-making the fundamental purposes of the mid-Atlantic coastal and ocean region and do so on a cooperative basis.

Article 2. Principles

The following principles shall guide agency, state and tribal implementation of this plan along with its further elaboration in furtherance of the fundamental purposes for which the Mid-Atlantic coastal and ocean region will be managed.

1. The federal government, its relevant agencies, the states and the Indian Tribes will implement this plan on a **government-to government basis**.
2. The federal government, its relevant agencies, the states and the Indian Tribes will be guided by **cooperation**, which reflects the interdependence of ocean users and uses and recognizes the mutual benefits that arise
3. As a key element of marine spatial planning is the public process, **transparency** in decision-making and **public engagement** shall be the norm
4. Actions and decision-making shall be guided by **best available science**
5. **Social, cultural, recreational and historic values** shall be given due respect
6. Both **use and non-use (intrinsic) values** shall each be given due consideration
7. Decision-making shall consider both **economic and non-economic values**
8. Decision-making shall account for **external costs** on a life-cycle basis, including the effects on **climate** and **human health**.
9. Management of marine resources shall be **anticipatory, precautionary and adaptive** as conditions warrant.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Apr 1, 2016 at 11:01 AM
Subject: Re: Recommendations for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body
To: "Chase, Alison" <achase@nrdc.org>
Cc: "Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov" <Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov>, "Gwynne Schultz -DNR-
(gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov)" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org"
<KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thank you for the letter on behalf of several organizations regarding the MidA RPB's efforts to develop the regional Ocean Action Plan. We appreciate your attendance at the MidA RPB meeting in Baltimore, and the recommendations you shared about the draft Ocean Action Plan.

We will forward your letter to the members of the MidA RPB for consideration as we continue our work. We will also post your letter to the written public comments section on the MidA RPB webpage.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have.

On Thu, Mar 31, 2016 at 3:18 PM, Chase, Alison <achase@nrdc.org> wrote:

Attached please find a letter from several organizations regarding the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body's work. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 212.727.4551.

Sincerely, Ali Chase

ALISON CHASE
Senior Policy Analyst

**NATURAL RESOURCES
DEFENSE COUNCIL**

40 W 20TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011
T 212.727.4551

ACHASE@NRDC.ORG

NRDC.ORG

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Think before printing.

**Maryland Coastal Bays Program • Natural Resources Defense Council • Surfrider Foundation •
Wild Oceans • Wildlife Conservation Society**

March 31, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Co-Leads:

Mr. Robert LaBelle
Senior Advisor to the Director
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U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Ms. Kelsey Leonard
Shinnecock Indian Nation
P.O. Box 5006
Southampton, New York 11969

Ms. Gwynne Schultz
Senior Coastal and Ocean Policy Advisor
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue, E2
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Submitted electronically

Re: Recommendations from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body's March 22-24 Meeting

Dear Mr. LaBelle, Ms. Schultz, and Ms. Leonard:

On behalf of our organizations, we thank you and rest of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) for your continued work to develop the first-ever *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* (OAP or Plan). Below please find several recommendations for inclusion in the draft Plan that would advance your efforts and build on your proposed interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) actions¹ to help attain this process' overarching goals of improved ocean health and increased sustainable use.

I. Explain how the IJC actions advance a more transparent, science-based decision-making structure and will improve ocean ecosystem health.

It was noted at last week's meeting that the IJC actions are the Plan's "heart" and, as such, they are how the public and decision-makers will judge the RPB's value. It is essential to the RPB's continued progress that the draft Plan clearly lay out how the work of this planning body represents a new and long-term change in ocean resource management and will bring about on-the-water improvements beyond promises to further collaborate. Sharing details upfront in the document about how regional planning has already

¹ Draft actions available at <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/>.

resulted in improved decision-making will put into context the real challenges each of you face daily to manage a shared resource responsibly and which a siloed governmental approach cannot provide.²

While we understand that the PowerPoint slides provided in advance of the meeting³ are, by their very nature, vague, we are concerned that, as the actions currently read, this Plan does not move much beyond the basic goals and objectives agreed to nearly two years ago in the *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework* (Framework).⁴ In large part, the IJC “actions” appear to be promises for greater coordination in the future. There are promises to convene meetings between parties instead of delineating why and when meetings will occur.⁵ There are promises to update points of contact, but less about encouraging active collaboration on projects between ocean users.⁶ In many cases actions like these are “ongoing,” raising questions of whether or not this work is new and why it is needed.

We appreciate that the Plan serves as a high-level strategic planning document, but, in order for the public and stakeholders to grasp the relevance of the RPB’s work to advance integrated ocean management and hold the various parties accountable going forward, it is critical that the OAP explain the value of the actions and how they are more than just rephrasing the status quo. We encourage the RPB to follow up on recommendations made at the meeting to better communicate the cross-cutting actions, perhaps by a matrix or symbology. Currently the slides make the IJC actions appear “stovepiped” by agency. It could be very helpful if the RPB could develop and include schematics or tables that clearly contrast how decision-making on major ocean issues like sand management or renewable ocean energy was conducted prior to the National Ocean Policy, and how it is projected to change under the guidance and best practices delineated in the OAP.

Additionally, timeline details are needed, particularly for the short-term actions. More than 85 percent of the sub-actions are labeled “short-term” to be completed within two years of the Plan’s approval, yet there is no sense of prioritization and many of the lead entities remain “to be determined.”⁷ Without key dates and details on the short-term actions it will be challenging to keep deliverables on track over the next two years and for stakeholders to know when they can engage. For example, we strongly support Healthy Ocean Ecosystems Action 2 to “Develop and publish indicators of the health of the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean ecosystem”⁸ and would like to know roughly when coordination with the science community and stakeholders to review potential indicators might occur. In the draft OAP, all actions should list one or more agencies dedicated championing them. It would also be helpful to define what role the lead entity/entities take on, as several actions would benefit from having a greater number of agencies involved and we would like to understand whether or not this is what is envisioned.⁹

² One way to accomplish this might be to set out several real examples in the draft OAP of how a challenge might have been addressed prior to the ocean planning effort, and how connections and information learned through the RPB led to a different and better process for resolution.

³ Meeting materials available at <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/>. All slides referenced below come from this document.

⁴ Framework available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework/>.

⁵ See, for example, Slide 24: “Offer to meet with Tribes to discuss fishery management, and invite state officials to participate in meetings with Tribes.”

⁶ See, for example, Slide 17: “Identify appropriate points of contact for the national security data layers on the Data Portal and continually update.”

⁷ See, for example, the Healthy Ocean Ecosystems Action 1 on Slide 9.

⁸ At Slide 10.

⁹ For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration could engage in opportunities to improve coordination between marine commerce and navigation, as actions might impact marine life, yet only the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of Transportation are listed (Slide 30).

II. Include a framework for identifying ecologically rich areas and a detailed timeline for completion of this work in the draft Plan.

The RPB must include in the draft OAP a fleshed-out framework for identifying a range of ecologically rich areas (ERAs). Identification of ERAs is critical work at the core of ocean planning. Data is only as useful as our ability to process and analyze it – we need to translate the wealth of ecosystem knowledge we have into meaningful synthesis products that can be used in tandem with base layers to inform decision-making across the region. Knowing where important ecological places are will help regional managers, business entities, and other stakeholders make more responsible decisions to ensure ocean health.

We recommend that the proposed framework rely heavily on, if not be identical to, the framework under development by the Northeast Regional Planning Body’s Ecosystem Based Management Work Group (Work Group) that is based on the National Ocean Policy’s definition of important ecological areas.¹⁰ The Work Group has made great strides in identifying ways to characterize, with existing data, important ecological areas. Running models based on the framework would result in helpful new data synthesis products that boil down the many Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal (Portal) ecological data layers, allowing us to pinpoint areas that serve as the workhorses of our ocean system. ERAs may be special for different reasons, but together this group of key ecological features will help define the region’s system and tell us what makes the Mid-Atlantic Ocean special. We suggest that the RPB continue to reach out to the scientific community for advice during the comment process on scientifically acceptable thresholds/criteria by which to model the framework’s components.

We strongly recommend that OAP provide a timeline by which a suite of ERAs can be identified based on science community, stakeholder, and public feedback of this framework, and that first modeling runs of the ecological components be completed by the end of 2016 for discussion. These draft ERAs should be released to the public for feedback, including as Geographic Information System shapefiles so that stakeholders can use the Portal and other mapping platforms to see how the areas might overlap use the human data layers. A first set of ERAs should be finalized no later than early 2017.

III. Include an IJC sub-action to identify the existing regulatory authorities that federal agencies might use to conserve the Mid-Atlantic’s identified abundance core areas.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean’s (MARCO) ecological data synthesis team in January identified several “abundance core areas”¹¹ – areas of high biodiversity where more than 50 percent of the region’s fish, birds, corals, and marine mammals can be found over the course of a year. The abundance core areas represent the best aggregated marine life maps ever created for this region and are based on peer-reviewed data sets. We believe these areas help satisfy the National Ocean Policy’s call in the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* (Final Recommendations) for RPBs to “investigate, assess, forecast, and analyze ... The ecological condition and relative ecological importance or values of areas within the planning area, including identification of areas of particular

¹⁰ The *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* states at 44 that regional ocean planning should “improve ecosystem health and services by planning human uses in concert with the conservation of important ecological areas, such as areas of high productivity and biological diversity; areas and key species that are critical to ecosystem function and resiliency; areas of spawning, breeding, and feeding; areas of rare or functionally vulnerable marine resources; and migratory corridors.” (Document available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf.)

¹¹ Available at <http://midatlanticocean.org/mid-atlantic-states-present-ocean-data-products/>.

ecological importance.”¹² We recognize that some of the abundance core areas may shift over time and strongly support the OAP’s efforts to predict species movements and climate-related changes. However, we also believe that several of these areas are likely related to the existence of valuable habitat structure and that all would benefit from protections in the face of challenges like ocean acidification and increasing industrialization.

The Final Recommendations also note “... [regional ocean planning] ultimately is intended to result in *protection of areas* that are essential for the resiliency and maintenance of healthy ecosystem services and biological diversity, and to maximize the ability of marine resources to continue to support a wide variety of human uses.”¹³ To advance this, we urge the RPB to include a sub-action under Healthy Ocean Ecosystems Action 1 – “Identify ecologically rich areas and region-wide features of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean and increase understanding of those areas to foster more informed decision-making”¹⁴ – committing the agencies participating on the RPB to identify existing authorities that could be used to conserve the health of these areas. This work could help advise agencies’ efforts to develop planning solutions for the pilot ERA area noted in Healthy Ocean Ecosystems Action 1B: “Identify and recommend to the RPB at least one pilot ecologically rich area/region-wide ecological feature for more in-depth assessment.”¹⁵ We also recommend setting out in the draft OAP, criteria for the RPB’s selection of an ERA pilot project, such as the need for high levels of confidence in the data and/ or the fact that an area is experiencing or predicted to experience a high degree of conflict between uses and ecological resources.

IV. Establish a commitment in the draft Plan’s best practices to promote ocean ecosystem health – including by reducing or eliminating the risk of degradation to abundance core areas and ERAs.

We support the discussion at the recent meeting to commit in the OAP to implement best practices that describe how RPB entities will use the Portal data in their decision-making and recommend that the RPB’s overarching goal to “Promote ocean ecosystem health, functionality, and integrity through conservation, protection, enhancement, and restoration”¹⁶ also be captured in the best practices section¹⁷ to advise cross-cutting work of the RPB. We urge that the Plan’s best practices include a commitment that each agency represented on the RPB will seek to improve the health of our ocean systems, including, but not limited to, undertaking efforts to conserve the ecological functioning of abundance core areas and ERAs. Decisions are made every day about where and how to develop our increasingly industrialized oceans; we need to commit to conserve our special ocean places before their ecological value is destroyed and no longer there to conserve.

We want to reiterate that calling for conservation of abundance core areas and of ERAs should not automatically generate “no go zones” where all activities are discouraged; we believe that multiple uses can occur within important ecological areas so long as they do not detract from the areas’ functioning, and we urge you to clearly articulate this in the OAP to enhance understanding.

¹² Final Recommendations at 57, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf.

¹³ Final Recommendations at 44, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf. Emphasis added.

¹⁴ At Slide 9.

¹⁵ At Slide 9.

¹⁶ Framework at 6, available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework/>.

¹⁷ At Slide 59.

V. Offer more opportunities for stakeholder and public engagement in IJC actions that foster early project coordination.

We appreciate that many current IJC actions stress the need for greater coordination between and among federal agencies, tribes, and states, but again urge you to broaden the scope of review to include stakeholders, including the public, in early consideration of projects likely to leave a large footprint. For example, at the March meeting there was discussion of the possible creation of a Regional Sand Management Work Group that would bring together federal and state agencies to discuss how offshore federal sand resources could be used to support state coastal redevelopment projects. We agree that there is great value in tackling the charged topic of sand management on a regional basis¹⁸ and were pleased to see that fishing communities would also be included in some planning and review elements,¹⁹ but recommend that the RPB add significant public involvement and engagement by all stakeholder interests at the initial stages, including that of beach goers who would be impacted by beach renourishment projects. Committing to factor in the public and stakeholders' feedback in assessing project viability when a project is first proposed would result in open discussions early in the review process where feedback is most valuable, as opposed to when the process is further down the road when developers and decision-makers have less flexibility. We also suggest that an overarching IJC action be included in the document that creates a mechanism for stakeholders to request that the RPB take up a particular offshore interest that might benefit from greater regional discussion and use the RPB as a forum to advance that conversation.

VI. Continue to build on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment.

Thank you for posting the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment²⁰ (ROA) on the Portal; we encourage you to continue its development beyond the draft Plan. We hope to see future ROA iterations identify specific elements of our ocean (*e.g.*, native species, habitat diversity, key species populations, ecosystem connectivity) and the existing status, trends and the acceptable condition for each. Simply adding detail to the "Living Marine Resources" of the unique ocean life found in our region would leave readers with a greater understanding and appreciation of the ocean wildlife that inhabit or move through the region.²¹

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to share our recommendations with you. We appreciate your efforts to gather the best ocean science available on the Portal and urge you to include the above actions, especially to identify and conserve ERAs, and to commit to continued data collection and refinement. We welcome

¹⁸ At Slide 35.

¹⁹ At Slide 36.

²⁰ Available at <http://roa.midatlanticocean.org/>.

²¹ Please note that under "Important Biological, Chemical, and Physical Attributes: Submarine Canyons," the ROA states there are more than 70 major canyons off the Mid-Atlantic shelf; however this number is for the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast shelf combined. *See*, for example, <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/oceanos/explorations/ex1206/welcome.html>. Further, under "Commercial and Recreational Fishing," the last sentence on the page states "The Mid-Atlantic is the only region in the country that has no stocks that are overfished or undergoing overfishing." While this is true of stocks managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, it is not true of stocks managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, where a number of stocks in the Mid-Atlantic are depleted (*e.g.*, Atlantic lobster).

discussion with you on any of these concepts and hope to see these ideas reflected in a bold, environmentally protective OAP that sets the stage for improving the future of ocean management.

Sincerely,

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Pam Lyons Gromen
Executive Director
Wild Oceans

Katherine Phillips
Program Manager
Maryland Coastal Bays Program

Merry Camhi, PhD
Director, New York Seascape
Wildlife Conservation Society

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Apr 4, 2016 at 10:21 AM
Subject: Re: Comments on Working Draft Content of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan
To: brent.greenfield@oceanpolicy.com

Thank you for the letter on behalf of the National Ocean Policy Coalition regarding the MidA RPB's efforts to develop the working draft content of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. We appreciate your attendance at the MidA RPB meeting in Baltimore, and the recommendations you shared about the draft Ocean Action Plan.

We will forward your letter to the members of the MidA RPB for consideration as we continue our work. We will also post your letter to the written public comments section on the MidA RPB webpage.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have.

On Fri, Apr 1, 2016 at 5:00 PM, <brent.greenfield@oceanpolicy.com> wrote:
Attached please find a National Ocean Policy Coalition comment letter on the Working Draft Content of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.

Please contact me at (713) 337-8821 or brent.greenfield@oceanpolicy.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Brent

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April 1, 2016

Mr. Robert LaBelle
Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Federal Co-Lead
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
381 Elden Street, MS-3127
Herndon, VA 20170

Ms. Gwynne Schultz
Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body State Co-Lead
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue
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Ms. Kelsey Leonard
Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Tribal Co-Lead
Shinnecock Indian Nation
PO Box 5006
Southampton, NY 11969

Submitted Electronically via MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov

RE: Comments on Working Draft Content of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan

Dear Mr. LaBelle, Ms. Schultz, and Ms. Leonard:

To supplement our statements provided during formal public comment sessions at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body's (RPB) March 22-24 meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, the National Ocean Policy Coalition ("Coalition") is pleased to submit written comments on the Working Draft Content of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.¹

The Coalition is an organization of diverse interests representing sectors and entities that support tens of millions of jobs, contribute trillions of dollars to the U.S. economy, and seek to ensure that actions under the National Ocean Policy are implemented in a manner that best benefits the National interest, including protection of the commercial and recreational value of the oceans, marine-related natural resources, and terrestrial lands of the United States.

INTRODUCTION

Ocean and coastal policies play a critical role in our national, regional, and local economies, national security, culture, health, and well-being. The Coalition supports ocean and coastal policies that serve as mechanisms for job creation, infrastructure revitalization, and economic growth, conserve the natural resources and marine habitat of our ocean and coastal regions, and rely on full utilization of existing processes and programs and well-established authorities that are already in place.

¹ See <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/>.

The Coalition acknowledges and agrees with statements by RPB members that the RPB is not a regulatory body and does not have the authority to engage in regulatory decision-making activity. However, we continue to have significant concerns about regulatory impacts of RPB activities and urge the RPB to address the following comments to ensure a product that does not unnecessarily and adversely impact commercial and recreational interests and increase regulatory uncertainty.

PROPOSED OCEAN PLAN ACTIONS

As the Coalition has noted in previous comments, a primary driver of concerns regarding regional ocean planning efforts under the National Ocean Policy/RPB construct is the fact that, pursuant to the foundational National Ocean Policy documents, RPB products including marine plans are to be implemented by federal agencies to the maximum extent, including through regulations where necessary.²

In addition to language included in the RPB's Charter and Regional Ocean Planning Framework,³ the RPB's Working Draft Content proposed actions underscore concerns about the regulatory impacts that could result from implementation of the Mid-Atlantic ocean plan. While each of the following proposed actions are not regulatory actions in and of themselves, agencies bound to implement them to the maximum extent will have to ensure all subsequent federal actions, including regulation, are consistent with their outcomes:

- For select identified ecologically rich areas or region-wide ecological features, "Develop a comprehensive factual report to inform management authorities in decision-making"

² See Executive Order for Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes, July 19, 2010, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/2010stewardship-EO.pdf>, Section 6 ("All executive departments, agencies, and offices that are members of the [National Ocean] Council and any other executive department, agency, or office whose actions affect the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes shall, to the fullest extent consistent with applicable law...[p]articipate in the process for coastal and marine spatial planning and comply with Council certified coastal and marine spatial plans, as described in the Final Recommendations and subsequent guidance from the Council."); Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, July 19, 2010, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf, Pages 47, ("Where pre-existing legal constraints, either procedural or substantive, are identified for any Federal agency, the NOC would work with the agency to evaluate necessary and appropriate legislative solutions or changes to regulations to address the constraints. In the interim, agencies would comply with existing legal requirements but should endeavor, to the maximum extent possible, to integrate their actions with those of other partners to a CMS Plan."); 61-62 ("...State and Federal regulatory authorities would adhere to, for example, the processes for improved and more efficient permitting, environmental reviews, and other decision-making identified in the CMS [Coastal and Marine Spatial] Plan to the extent these actions do not conflict with existing legal obligations. State and Federal authorities with programs relevant to the CMS Plan would in a timely manner review and modify programs, as appropriate, to ensure their respective activities, including discretionary spending (e.g., grants and cooperative agreements), adhere to the CMS Plan to the extent possible. State and Federal agencies would also be expected to formally incorporate relevant components of the CMS Plan into their ongoing operations or activities consistent with existing law. This may be implemented in a variety of ways. For example, agencies could enter into memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to coordinate or unify permit reviews and decision-making processes. Where existing regulatory or statutory requirements impose constraints on the ability of an agency to fully implement the CMS Plan, the agency would seek, as appropriate, regulatory or legislative changes to fully implement the CMS Plan."); 62 ("...CMS Plans...are intended to guide agency decision-making and agencies would adhere to the final CMS Plans to the extent possible, consistent with existing authorities...Once a CMS Plan is approved, Federal, State, and tribal authorities would implement them through their respective legal authorities."); and 65-66 ("Agencies would incorporate components of the CMS Plan into their respective regulations to the extent possible. Adherence with CMSP would be achieved through Federal and State agencies and tribal authorities incorporating CMS Plans into their pre-planning, planning, and permitting processes, to the extent consistent with existing laws and regulations. The CMS Plan signatories would periodically review these processes, and where legal constraints are identified, would seek to remedy these constraints, including by working with the NOC to evaluate whether a legislative solution or changes to regulations are necessary and appropriate."); National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan, April 2013, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/national_ocean_policy_implementation_plan.pdf, Page 21 (Marine planning will support regional actions and decision-making...); and Marine Planning Handbook, July 2013, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/final_marine_planning_handbook.pdf, Page 17 ("By their concurrence, Federal agencies agree that they will use the marine plan to inform and guide their actions in the region consistent with their existing missions and authorities.").

³ See Charter for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, Page 3, available at <http://www.boem.gov/MidA-RPB-Charter/> ("...regional marine planning...is intended to provide a framework for application of existing laws and authorities," and "RPB member agencies agree to participate in the development of a process to create and implement regional marine planning products..."), and Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework, Page 2, available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework/> ("Regional ocean planning helps guide resource conservation...").

- For “application of the ocean action plan under existing authorities,” “Implement best practices to enhance coordination and the use of data and information...Federal agencies will implement best practices...”
- For ocean energy, “Develop internal agency guidance on integrating the OAP-developed best practices for using the Mid-Atlantic Data Portal in management, environmental, and regulatory reviews,” “Using best practices developed in the OAP, BOEM will increase use of the Data Portal in management, environmental, and regulatory reviews,” and “Coordinate closely with Tribal partners to protect sites from impact and resolve any impact in consultation with the Tribes, pursuant to the agreements” (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management lead entity)
- “Evaluate management options under the Coastal Zone Management Act” and “Establish new practice(s) and implement as appropriate” (NOAA and Mid-Atlantic states lead entities)
- “Map shifts in ocean species and habitats to address one aspect of climate change,” and “Convene managers, scientists, and stakeholders to discuss...potential management application of the maps”
- “Develop best practices on the appropriate use of tribal historical, archeological and spiritual information compiled during the ocean planning process”
- “Develop report(s) on potential improvements to practices and processes as determined necessary, feasible, and appropriate” for areas deemed “high-value” for non-consumptive recreation
- “Use the Mid-Atlantic [Ocean Action Plan] and Data Portal data to guide and inform Department of Defense programs, initiatives, and planning documents” and “Consult the Mid-Atlantic OAP and the Data Portal in preparation of internal [DOD] agency guidance, existing procedures, and environmental planning”
- “Use data and information from the Data Portal and OAP to inform regulatory review of marine development activities related to undersea infrastructure”
- For offshore sand management, “Develop a comprehensive inventory of sand resources to support planned and future restoration and resilience projects, provide availability for emergency use, and **manage competing use challenges**” (emphasis added), and “Identify potential conflicts or concerns through review of data used for scoping and environmental analysis and work with fishermen to identify high use areas early on to avoid use conflicts”⁴

Thus, while the Working Draft Content document notes that proposed actions “do not change existing authorities or create new mandates” and although the RPB has stated that “regional planning bodies are not regulatory bodies and have no independent legal authority to regulate or otherwise direct Federal, State, Tribal, or local government actions,”⁵ the ocean plan may have far-reaching consequences in part by serving as a precursor to regulatory activity through the requirement that federal entities, upon signing the Regional Ocean Plan, are binding their agencies to implement and ensure their consistency with RPB products.⁶

Moreover, despite this requirement and as further discussed below, it remains unclear exactly what particular actions would ultimately be required upon the application of agency signatures to the ocean plan. Without such information, the Coalition and stakeholders in general are unable to determine and effectively comment on the meaning of proposed plan actions (and thus the ultimate plan itself),

⁴ See <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/> (Slides 9, 12, 16, 19, 22, 33, 36, 37, 44, 46, 59, and 60).

⁵ See <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/> and <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Action-Plan-Options/>.

⁶ See e.g. July 19, 2010 Executive Order on Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/2010stewardship-eo.pdf>, Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/2010stewardship-eo.pdf>, National Ocean Council Marine Planning Handbook, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/final_marine_planning_handbook.pdf, and National Ocean Council Guidance for Marine Plans, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/guidance_for_marine_plans_final_151001.pdf.

including the potential costs and benefits and short- and long-term implications associated with agencies being bound to actions included in the ocean plan.

It is premature and ill-advised to bind agencies to plan outcomes, and the inherent potential for uncertainty, confusion, delay, and adverse impacts likely to emanate from this non-statutorily based process underscores the critical need to reduce the likelihood of such a result.

Therefore, the work of the Mid-Atlantic RPB should be advisory only and non-binding in nature, and the proposed actions cited above should be excluded from the draft ocean plan.

Consistent with the National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan's emphasis on the flexibility of regions to determine the scope, scale, and content of marine planning in a manner that "reflect[s] their unique interests, capacity to participate, and ways of doing business,"⁷ rather than seek and prescribe agency implementation commitments, the ocean plan and related products should be non-binding and reflect that agency implementation is strictly voluntary and based on agencies' own careful, independent, and transparent consideration and best judgment, consistent with existing applicable laws and regulations.

To the degree that the RPB nonetheless includes the above-listed actions in the draft ocean plan, and for all ocean plan content, to ensure adequate opportunity for informed public review and comments, the RPB must be specific in describing its proposed actions and how and precisely when agencies would implement them in their management, planning, review, and decision-making activities (at minimum providing such specificity in the draft ocean plan released for public comment, or even sooner in revised Working Draft Content for additional public review and comment).

For example, as to the proposal to implement best practices to enhance coordination and the use of ocean plan data and information,⁸ what are the best practices that are being proposed to enhance the use of ocean plan data and information, and how do agencies specifically intend to use such data and information? For ocean energy, as to the proposed use of ocean plan-developed best practices to increase BOEM's use of the Mid-Atlantic data portal in management, environmental, and regulatory reviews, how exactly would BOEM and other agencies use the portal in such a manner, which reviews would they apply to, and at what stage(s) of the various review processes would they be incorporated?

To ensure a sufficient opportunity for informed public review and comments, the draft ocean plan should also explain how each proposed action would impact existing agency practices. For example, the Working Draft Content includes a proposed Ocean Energy action for BOEM to "Coordinate closely with Tribal partners to protect sites from impact and resolve any impact in consultation with the Tribes, pursuant to the agreements." In addition to providing clarity on what the close coordination would involve, the draft plan should clearly state how this proposed action would differ from current agency activities carried out in accordance with existing laws and practices.

In addition, given the potential for intersects between actions taken under the ocean plans and activities carried out under multiple existing statutory authorities, **the draft ocean plan should comprehensively address how proposed actions relate to each and every relevant legal authority and how they will be carried out consistent with legislative text and intent.**

⁷ See National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan, April 2013, Page 22, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/national_ocean_policy_implementation_plan.pdf

⁸ See <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/> (Slide 59).

Such information is critical to commercial and recreational users who are seeking to determine how implementation of this plan might impact their activities and effectively provide informed input prior to the ocean plan's finalization.

Several proposed actions merit special mention. As to the proposal to "Identify ecologically rich areas and region-wide ecological features of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean and increase understanding of those areas to foster more informed decision-making,"⁹ **the Coalition opposes any proposed actions that would involve resources devoted to redundant efforts to identify such areas and application of information about these areas, developed through processes and criteria that deviate from existing resource management mandates, to regulatory and management programs that may have different purposes and goals.**

In addition to impacts on commercial and recreational interests, identifying and applying such information in the absence of legislatively-established criteria and guidance threatens to introduce significant legal uncertainty and potential statutory conflicts. Discussion during the RPB's March meeting about using the Northeast RPB approach as a guide reinforces these concerns. Rather than cite a statute, the Northeast RPB has proposed to develop criteria for important ecological areas by relying on recommendations developed by a government task force, noting overlap with criteria developed by non-U.S. federal governmental entities including Oceana.¹⁰

Should the RPB decide to maintain the action to identify ecologically rich areas and region-wide ecological features in the draft ocean plan, **any criteria proposed to be used to identify any ecologically rich areas or region-wide ecological features, the identification of any such areas, and the selection of any pilot areas for more in-depth assessment must be developed consistent with applicable law, in a public and transparent manner, and subject to adequate public review and comment opportunities, with the draft ocean plan clearly stating the specific public review processes that would be provided.**

Given that its development and implementation has not been authorized or funded by Congress, **the Coalition opposes any proposed actions that would involve use of the ocean plan to influence decision-making under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and other laws.**

The Coalition welcomes the RPB decision during its March meeting to remove the proposed assessment of potential opportunities to "streamline CZMA federal consistency requirements" given unease about overstepping the authority of the RPB and potential states' right implications. However, the Coalition remains concerned by other language under the proposed "Evaluate management options under the [CZMA]" action that calls for a similar assessment to "inform CZMA coastal effects determinations" and to "establish new practice(s) and implement as appropriate."¹¹

As the statute intended, CZMA application and CZM plans are inherently state-specific, with each such plan guided by purposes and a history unique to that particular state and which may or may not align with the interests of the RPB. Using the RPB ocean planning effort to influence CZMA-related decision-making could thus conflict or otherwise interfere with state CZMA work and user group activities carried out under well-established law and processes.

To the extent that it nonetheless includes the evaluation of management options under CZMA in the draft ocean plan, **the RPB should specify that any resulting actions will respect and ensure consistency**

⁹ See <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/> (Slide 9).

¹⁰ See <http://neoceanplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Draft-Components-of-IEAs.pdf>.

¹¹ See <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/> (Slide 60).

with state policies and programs and all applicable federal laws, accommodate variations in policy choices among states in the region, and utilize data and information that complies with all relevant federal and state data and information quality laws, standards, and protocols.

Similarly, at the March meeting the RPB decided to further explore adding a proposed action to develop guidelines regarding the use of data and information for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultations and/or designations. As with CZMA, **the Coalition opposes any actions that would involve the use of the RPB process to compel changes to the ways in which federal resource agencies conduct statutorily-required consultations and decision-making under laws such as the Magnuson-Stevens Act and urges the RPB not to add the EFH proposed action that was discussed at the March meeting.**

In the event that it includes such an action in the draft ocean plan, **the RPB should make clear that any proposed actions intended to impact EFH consultations and/or designations would not deprive agencies of their right to exercise their statutorily-granted discretionary authority as they deem appropriate, even if the exercise of such authority is deemed to be inconsistent with a plan or process already developed through the RPB.** Any EFH-related data or information referenced in the ocean plan must also be subject to clear guidance and protocols, including minimum requirements that ensure compliance with relevant federal and state data and information quality laws, standards, and protocols.

AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE AND OTHER ESSENTIAL MATERIALS

The RPB noted last fall that the National Ocean Council and agency general counsel were developing guidance on how agencies will use the plan, and that it anticipated that additional guidance would be developed regarding the nature and detail of agency commitments. It also noted that the National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were developing technical guidance on the use of marine life data that might be included in the ocean plan.¹²

In addition to providing specificity on all ocean plan proposed actions in the draft plan, **all draft guidance developed to date related to potential agency use of the ocean plan and the nature and detail of agency commitments should be released immediately for public review and comment.**

In addition to any public comment periods established by the RPB, and **prior to making and acting on any implementation commitments, all individual agencies intending to make commitments to use the Mid-Atlantic ocean plan in carrying out their activities should initiate their own public review periods through formal notice and comment procedures under the Administrative Procedure Act and relevant authorities.** Such public notices should clearly and specifically explain how the applicable agency intends to use the plan in their activities, the resources that will be used to support plan implementation commitments, and the authorities on which they assert jurisdiction to do so.

While the RPB intends to circulate and release a draft ocean plan in the coming weeks and months, in addition to details on how agencies intend to use the plan, the user group community and public at large is still awaiting the release of marine life and habitat raw data and summary products and a human use data report that will form a backbone of the ocean plan.

In addition, during the March meeting an RPB member referenced a commitment to developing a strong and more detailed work plan. **As with the agency guidance, the Coalition calls on the RPB to provide significant public review and comment opportunities on all of these products well in advance of the draft plan's release and to release them as quickly as possible.** By not drafting and vetting all

¹² See Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Draft Outline, available at <http://www.boem.gov/Draft-OAP-outline-September-2015/> (Pages 3 and 4).

the various components of the draft ocean plan under development in a clear, public, and methodical manner, the ability to provide effective and informed comments and ascertain what agencies will be bound to follow is being precluded.

Before it moves further ahead, the RPB should also finalize a stakeholder engagement strategy and publish the final criteria that have guided the identification of the proposed ocean plan actions. While draft criteria were published in advance of the RPB's Jan. 2015 meeting, RPB discussion during that meeting left it unclear as to the precise set of final criteria that were agreed to and that have since been informing the identification of proposed actions.

OCEAN PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Working Draft Content indicates that a final performance monitoring and evaluation plan may not be developed until after the plan is agreed to.¹³ **The RPB should commit to completing a final performance monitoring and evaluation plan that has been subject to public review and comment before it releases the draft ocean plan.** In addition, **the performance monitoring and evaluation plan should include mechanisms to evaluate the impact of implementation on the ability of current and potential future commercial and recreational interests to perform activities in the region.**

OCEAN PLAN DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

The Coalition strongly urges the RPB to reconsider its decision to release the draft ocean plan for a mere 45 days of public comment.¹⁴ Forty-five days is wholly insufficient to secure adequate time for potentially affected groups and communities to review and provide informed input on a plan that could impact jobs and livelihoods across the region. In comparison, when Massachusetts released a draft plan that only covered *one* state, it provided 60 days for comment. When Rhode Island released its plan, it provided 48 days for comment, after having also provided earlier public comment opportunities on individual chapters of the plan.

As agencies determine the details on how they will implement this plan, user groups and others that are following this process are left with few engagement options other than public comment opportunities. Given the dynamic and the potential wide-ranging impacts of this plan, **the RPB should commit to a minimum 90-day public comment period on the draft ocean plan, with the draft ocean plan providing the content and specificity necessary to provide effective and informed comments on the draft plan and related products (including but not limited to proposed agency actions, agency implementation commitments, data products and reports, and potential costs and benefits).**

CONCLUSION

To reduce the likelihood of unnecessary and adverse impacts on commercial and recreational interests and increased regulatory uncertainty, the RPB should develop an advisory and non-binding draft ocean plan that excludes proposed requirements on agencies, including but not limited to those that are designed to influence regulation and decision-making under existing laws.

In addition, the RPB should clearly and specifically communicate how and when agencies intend to implement all proposed actions and how each proposed action would (1) impact existing agency practices; (2) relate to each and every relevant legal authority; and (3) be carried out consistent with legislative text and intent.

¹³ See <http://www.boem.gov/Working-Draft-MidA-OAP-Content/> (Slide 61).


¹⁴ See <http://www.boem.gov/Updated-MidA-RPB-Timeline/>.

The RPB and its member agencies should also should immediately release for public review and comment all draft guidance developed to date regarding potential agency use of the ocean plan and the nature and detail of agency commitments, as well as seek comments on how agencies intend to use the plan in their activities, the resources that will be used to support plan implementation commitments, and the authorities on which they assert jurisdiction to do so.

To ensure an adequate opportunity for informed comments on the draft ocean plan, the RPB should also commit to providing a minimum 90 days of public comment and release a draft ocean plan that includes a final performance monitoring and evaluation plan that has been subject to prior public review and comment.

The Coalition appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Working Draft Content and respectfully requests that the RPB consider the comments herein as it considers next steps and develops the draft ocean plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent D. Greenfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Brent Greenfield
Executive Director
National Ocean Policy Coalition

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Apr 6, 2016 at 1:57 PM
Subject: Re: Comment on RPB materials and IJC actions
To: "LaBelle, Robert" <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, Amy Trice <atrice@oceanconservancy.org>
Cc: BOEM MidAtlanticRPB <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, Gwynne Schultz <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>

Thank you for sharing the letter from the Ocean Conservancy to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body co-leads.

We appreciate your attendance at the MidA RPB meeting in Baltimore, and the comments you shared about the draft Ocean Action Plan. The RPB will consider all input received, and will post your message on the written public comments section of the RPB website.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have, and please check the RPB website (<http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/>) for information and updates.

On Wed, Apr 6, 2016 at 1:37 PM, LaBelle, Robert <robert.labelle@boem.gov> wrote:

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) Co-leads, I am forwarding the attached letter to be shared with the full RPB.

thanks,
Bob

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Amy Trice** <atrice@oceanconservancy.org>
Date: Fri, Apr 1, 2016 at 6:46 PM
Subject: Comment on RPB materials and IJC actions
To: "robert.labelle@boem.gov" <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, "gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "kelseyleonard@shinnecock.org" <kelseyleonard@shinnecock.org>
Cc: Ingrid Irigoyen <irigoyen@merid.org>

Dear Mid-Atlantic RPB Co-leads,

Please find the attached comments from Ocean Conservancy on the recent Mid-Atlantic RPB materials and draft IJC actions.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Amy Trice

Amy Trice
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April 1, 2016

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RE: Comment on Recent Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Materials and March 2016 Meeting

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Co-Leads:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean plan. We thank you for your continued commitment and leadership in regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic. We are excited about the progress the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) has made to date and thank you for your continued stakeholder engagement and work to address public comments within the plan. We urge the RPB to ensure ocean users are reflected in the plan through their respective uses and data. Additionally, the plan must clearly identify benefits to stakeholders with specific examples where appropriate. While the majority of the plan seeks to improve the way agencies interact and coordinate, ocean users must understand why these agency coordination improvements are beneficial. We urge the RPB to clearly articulate specific commitments throughout the ocean plan that allow ocean users to understand how these commitments will change the status quo. Specifically, the regional ocean plan would be improved with the following actions:

I. Identify commitments to use data and involve stakeholders at the beginning of the ocean plan

Ocean users expect the plan to result in improved decisions by using the best available data as well as stakeholder involvement to proactively identify and address conflicts early in the decision-making process. The basic outcomes we expect from the plan are:

- Best available data is used to inform and improve decision-making.
- Stakeholders are proactively involved in decision-making from the earliest stages, so that projects can be designed to address conflicts as opposed to reactively requiring modification.
- A venue is maintained where federal agencies, states, tribes, and stakeholders can work together to address ocean issues and recommend better processes to enhance decision-making.

We recommend revising the current draft materials to ensure these desired outcomes are met. Although these commitments are implied through the interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) actions that agencies are committing to, the RPB should clearly articulate commitments to use the data portal and continued stakeholder engagement. Specifically, the beginning of the ocean plan must identify the fundamental overarching principles that all RPB member agencies are committing to in the plan. We urge the RPB to be clear in its commitment with text such as:

1. *We will maintain and improve data in the data portal, including filling priority data gaps as identified in the plan.*
2. *We will use the data in the data portal to inform agency decision-making processes.*
3. *We will proactively identify and involve affected stakeholders from the very earliest stages of decision-making.*
4. *We will ensure the RPB serves as a forum for addressing interjurisdictional ocean management issues.*

These commitments will serve as the lens through which ocean users read the specific IJC actions from RPB member agencies and should be used to guide the specific IJC actions and sub-actions throughout the ocean plan.

II. Interjurisdictional actions and commitments must be specific and clear

The IJC actions should follow these overarching principles (*see text above*), and serve as *implementing commitments* for how these principles will be carried out for each IJC action category (e.g., offshore energy, national security). Ultimately, the IJC actions must articulate how plan commitments will change the status quo and result in improved decision-making. For example, the national security IJC actions as well as the commerce and navigation IJC actions are detailed and specific. However, this detail is not extended to actions such as offshore energy, healthy ocean ecosystems, and, in some cases, sand management. Suggestions for improvement surrounding IJC actions are:

Timelines

Specific timelines must be established to ensure accountability and stakeholder support. Sub-actions that are labeled either short or long-term must be more explicit with dates and prioritization for completion. The current IJC actions and sub-actions are vague, leaving ocean users with no sense of when these actions will be accomplished and no ability to ensure plan progress. Specifically, with respect to the healthy ocean ecosystems IJC actions, we encourage the RPB to utilize the framework and criteria under development by the Northeast RPB ecosystem-based management work group. We also strongly recommend that the ocean plan provide a timeline with specific actions by which a suite of ecologically rich areas can be identified based on scientist and ocean user feedback of this framework.

Offshore Energy and Sand Management

The draft IJC actions associated with offshore energy allude to improving stakeholder engagement; however, it is unclear how this stakeholder engagement will occur. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and other agencies involved in offshore energy permitting and sand management must commit to proactively involve affected stakeholders early in the project development process and to identify potential conflicts and concerns before significant investments have been made that could disincentivize changes to siting and design.

Many ocean users whose industry and livelihoods are affected by proposed offshore energy development are operating at regional scales and BOEM's stakeholder engagement should represent those interests throughout the region. For example, commercial fisheries and conservation interests are not bound by a given state boundary and by nature operate at regional scales. The regional ocean data portals coupled with regional stakeholder engagement, therefore, provide an opportunity to improve permitting time, reduce conflicts by ensuring problems are resolved early in the process, and save both BOEM and offshore renewable energy developers time and money. We urge commitments that ensure affected stakeholders are involved early, before offshore permitting of energy or sand removal occurs.

Specifically, BOEM can build upon the good work recently done through the *Collaborative Fisheries Planning for Virginia's Offshore Wind Energy Area* project¹ and the *Development of Mitigation Measures to Address Potential Use Conflicts between Commercial Wind Energy Lessees/Grantees and Commercial Fishers on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf* report² (hereafter, Mitigation Measures Report). For example, we urge action under offshore energy that commits to creating a regional fishery advisory committee that goes beyond the state by state task force approach. This regional advisory committee, which was identified as a priority in the 2013 Mitigation Measures Report, could be modeled after the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) marine fishery advisory committee. For both offshore energy and sand management actions, stakeholder outreach will only be effective when

¹www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/OceanPlanning/FishingandVirginiaOffshoreWind.aspx

² Development of Mitigation Measures to Address Potential Use Conflicts between Commercial Wind Energy Lessees/Grantees and Commercial Fishers on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf. US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Office of Renewable Energy Programs, Herndon, VA. OCS – 2013.

appropriate regional scales are considered as fishermen move beyond the state waters of their port and are not bound by specific borders.

Additional actions to consider that would improve both the offshore energy and sand management IJC actions are: 1. Have a regular presence at the Fishery Management Councils and report on the projects BOEM is permitting (while NOAA has committed to this within the draft IJC actions under commercial and recreational fisheries, BOEM should commit to a presence as well); 2. Identify and use relevant fishing communication media where appropriate and develop a newsletter for interested parties on BOEM permitting; 3. Use the MARCO data portal to post all BOEM permitting activities; 4. Urge developers within the permitting process to hire a fishery liaison with knowledge of potentially affected fisheries and provide development updates from the company on all actions offshore; 5. Undertake research that accurately incorporates the need for baseline characterization for offshore energy and sand management including fish population dynamics, oceanographic patterns, sediment, and habitat community composition. Many of these recommendations are outlined in the 2013 Mitigation Measures Report; however, specific commitments to these actions are not reflected in the current version of the IJC actions. We strongly encourage BOEM to be clear with its actions and build on its recent fishery and stakeholder engagement reports to enhance its permitting processes and outreach.

III. Build on research developed on the West Coast and utilize partnerships to develop an ocean acidification monitoring network

We are excited to see the RPB commit to taking steps to address ocean acidification. However, throughout the March 2016 meeting and draft materials, it was apparent that these ideas still need more detail. We support the IJC action addressing ocean acidification as it is currently written; however, we encourage you to use Ocean Conservancy's range of experts on the topic of climate change and ocean acidification to identify further details and research needs. We encourage you to use our comments below to inform a more detailed work plan on ocean acidification for each of the RPB member agency commitments within the ocean plan.

Ocean Conservancy's Ocean Acidification (OA) Program focuses on three primary objectives: 1. Building new champions ready to take action on OA both at the state and federal levels; 2. Synthesizing and publicizing findings from cutting-edge OA research to aid decision-making; and, 3. Mobilizing a growing constituency to speak out about this important issue. As part of this work, we closely track actions happening nationwide to address OA. There are several developments in the U.S. that can inform the development of a Mid-Atlantic OA monitoring network as called for by the RPB draft IJC action.

States on the West Coast have been grappling with ocean acidification for nearly a decade. In turn, states have developed a collaborative model that leverages many different state, federal, academic, and industry resources into a rapidly growing OA monitoring network³ accompanied by coordinated research activities.⁴ West Coast actions provide an example that can be modified and applied in the Mid-Atlantic.

³ http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2014/20141119_iooswebportal.html

⁴ <https://environment.uw.edu/research/major-initiatives/ocean-acidification/research-education-outreach/>

Key questions driving the creation of this network and West Coast research⁵ have included:

- Where will OA affect our coasts in the near term?
- Which species, ecosystems, and/or industries are most sensitive to OA?
- Can OA “events” be forecast?
- Can coastal users safeguard sensitive resources from OA?
- Which processes contributing to OA along coasts can be controlled locally?
- What are baseline water chemistry conditions in the area, and how does OA affect them?
- What is the long-term prognosis for OA in this area?

Other local questions can be developed as knowledge accumulates about the progress and effects of OA in a particular region. Research products tailor-made for the region also then follow.⁶ The West Coast OA monitoring network uses a combination of monitoring approaches to collect in situ data on OA. Regular hydrographic surveys by NOAA provide information several times a year on open-ocean and coastal chemistry, while autonomous buoys and gliders provide water chemistry data throughout the year in concentrated nearshore areas. The entire suite of observations has provided insight into the extent and progress of OA in this region.⁷ Researchers and industry have partnered to develop semi-automated water chemistry monitoring equipment packages⁸ that can be installed at shellfish hatcheries or other commercial locations where real-time information on water chemistry is needed. This equipment was critical for allowing the Pacific oyster industry to recover from several years of financial losses associated with ocean acidification.⁹ The network started in the Washington/Oregon area and now extends south to California and north to Alaska (*for map, see footnote 1*).

Close partnerships among federal, industry, academic, state, and tribal scientists have also been critical to plan, deploy, and maintain the OA sensors in the existing network and to interpret the enormous resulting data stream. The Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observatories (NANOOS), a regional branch of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), acted as a key convener to match problem-solvers across stakeholder groups in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁰ Funding for this effort was leveraged from many sources, including various branches of IOOS, NOAA programs and laboratories, and regional partners.¹¹ The Mid-Atlantic Regional Association Coastal Ocean Observing System (MARACOOS), analogous to NANOOS, could likely serve the same function in the Mid-Atlantic. While NANOOS was helping create a monitoring network with Washington and Oregon shellfish growers, the California Current Acidification Network (C-CAN) helped bring together researchers, resource managers, coastal businesspeople, and policy experts to develop a shared vision of network needs and guiding

⁵ <http://www.tos.org/oceanography/article/ocean-acidification-science-needs-for-natural-resource-managers-of-the-nort>

⁶ <http://news-oceanacidification-icc.org/2016/02/05/predicting-ocean-chemistry-using-microsoft-azure-text-video/>

⁷ <http://www.biogeosciences-discuss.net/bg-2016-104/>

⁸ www.academia.edu/3853550/The_Burkolator_pCO2_system

⁹ www.tos.org/oceanography/article/impacts-of-coastal-acidification-on-the-pacific-northwest-shellfish-industr

¹⁰ www.pmel.noaa.gov/pubs/PDF/newt4035/newt4035.pdf

¹¹ www.ipacoa.org/

principles.¹² A similar network exists in the Northeast (NECAN)¹³ and one is in development for the Mid-Atlantic (*NOAA OA Program Office, personal communication to S. Cooley, March 2016*). The RPB should build upon these ongoing efforts and work to collaborate on a successful OA monitoring network during ocean plan implementation.

Several states have already taken action on OA in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic,¹⁴ but a coordinated monitoring network will provide these efforts with more policy-relevant information and allow them to proceed further. Maine has convened a commission to assess the state of OA science and knowledge relevant to its interests, and Massachusetts and Maryland are considering this as well. New Jersey and Delaware have completed internal studies compiling the state of the science. In each case, understanding of current conditions and the major influences on OA in each state's water is poor due to lack of regional monitoring. Ocean Conservancy's own analysis (*see footnote 11*) found that when different types of stakeholders (fishermen and scientists, for example) work together, sustained progress is more likely than if just one group is involved. The success of the West Coast observing network is partly attributable to the multi-sectoral support for the efforts and the spirit of open collaboration embraced by the participants. Given the RPB's unique collaborative environment with states, federal agencies, and tribes as well as ocean users, commitments to develop a regional OA network with specific objectives and timelines would greatly enhance the success.

IV. Utilize long-term data and partnerships to advance marine debris IJC actions

While we are excited to see the RPB commit to addressing marine debris, we encourage the RPB to be specific with its actions. We support the draft IJC action as it is currently written; however, as you proceed with more detailed implementation plans we encourage you to partner where appropriate and to use existing data and resources to advance the marine debris IJC action. Ocean Conservancy has worked extensively on this issue and has over 30 years of data to support your efforts. We urge the RPB to utilize these resources when developing its marine debris strategies.

Given our long-term involvement in marine debris reduction, there are a number of tools available that could greatly enhance the marine debris IJC action. The Trash Free Seas Program, for example, has been a facet of Ocean Conservancy, in one form or other, since the inception of the organization in 1972. The cornerstone of the program is the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) that is the largest, global volunteer effort for ocean health. The 2015 ICC marked the 30th Anniversary of the event with thousands of cleanups taking place in nearly every U.S. state and close to 100 countries. Ocean Conservancy provides supportive resources including our [volunteer ocean trash data](#) card which allows volunteers to become citizen scientists, collecting data on the types and amount of debris that plagues our coast or waterway.

Moreover, this year our data collection has moved into the digital realm with a mobile debris data collection app called Clean Swell that is available now in the AppStore for iPhone and iPad users and on GooglePlay for Android users. This app simplifies and streamlines the data collection process, while keeping the experience easy and fun for users and the data compilation and analysis process efficient

¹² www.tos.org/oceanography/article/core-principles-of-the-california-current-acidification-network-linking-che

¹³ www.neracoos.org/necan

¹⁴ journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fmars.2015.00128/abstract

for cleanup organizers. The data will augment our 30 year ICC dataset and encourage year-round cleanup efforts. Ocean Conservancy's current database is available for reference and use by the RPB online.¹⁵

The RPB may also refer to actions Ocean Conservancy has taken to involve a range of sectors to address marine debris. For example, Ocean Conservancy is constantly evolving as we learn more about the nature and impacts of marine debris and ocean plastics through new scientific findings. We work to bring stakeholders from a number of different sectors –academia, industry, and science –to find innovative solutions to our marine debris problem through our Trash Free Seas Alliance®.¹⁶ We know that ocean trash is a complex and truly global problem and hence, will require a number of different approaches and solutions if we are to realize trash free seas. Cleaning up what's out there (through efforts like the ICC) and working with all stakeholders to prevent more trash from reaching the ocean (through the Alliance) are a major part of our program work. We also create a number of public outreach and educational materials that we share with educators, boaters and all of our cleanup partners around the world, all of which are available to the RPB. Our most recent resource is our education program for youth called [Talking Trash & Taking Action](#).¹⁷

Lastly, being based in Washington D.C., the Trash Free Seas Program is quite active in the Mid-Atlantic region. Each year, we host a large D.C. ICC event inviting partners, other NGOs, student groups, and more to participate in a cleanup. We also work closely with Keep America Beautiful and have held joint cleanups in the Chesapeake Bay region. Last year we held spring and fall cleanups in Chesapeake, V.A. We have strong partners in the Mid-Atlantic that draw thousands of volunteers to cleanups each year. During the 2014 ICC alone, over 21,000 volunteers participated in the Mid-Atlantic states and removed 524,000 pounds of debris from coasts and inland waterways. When developing the marine debris IJC action, we encourage the RPB to review existing datasets from our ICC work and utilize the partnerships already in place throughout the region.

V. Plan performance monitoring and evaluation: Create a mechanism for stakeholder input and requests to consider issues

Given the unique cross-sectoral forum the RPB provides, a specific mechanism should be established that allows stakeholders to petition the RPB to take up specific ocean management issues as they arise. The RPB provides a unique forum that allows relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders who utilize or manage the ocean to come together to address difficult issues. While the plan makes some initial commitments to improve the decision-making process, these approaches will likely need revision over time as the RPB and ocean users learn lessons through implementation. For example, if a permit for a particular ocean use occurs and the ocean plan is not working to fully address the management concerns, users could petition the RPB to hold a discussion forum to explore ways to improve the process. Additionally, issues or new ocean uses may potentially arise that the RPB has yet to address, and having a specific avenue to formally request the RPB take up such issues would enhance plan performance over time and work to improve future iterations of the ocean plan. This performance

¹⁵ www.coastalcleanupdata.org

¹⁶ www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/trash-free-seas-alliance/

¹⁷ <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/marine-debris/talking-trash-educational.html>

monitoring approach could take numerous forms, but a general framework could include: a stakeholder submitting a formal comment to the RPB; RPB Co-Leads deciding to take up the issue or dismissing; and, lastly, if the issue is prioritized for discussion, a RPB forum is held to discuss improvements to the plan with federal agencies, states, and tribes with interested stakeholders. We suggest adding this mechanism as part of the *performance monitoring and evaluation* section.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Mid-Atlantic ocean plan and your continued leadership and engagement in regional ocean planning.

Sincerely,

Anne Merwin
Director, Ocean Planning
Ocean Conservancy

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>

Date: Mon, May 9, 2016 at 7:26 AM

Subject: Re: Summary from MARCO Stakeholder Liaison Committee meeting- November 2015

To: Kate Morrison - MARCO <kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org>

Thank you for sharing this information with the MidA RPB. The MidA RPB will consider all comments received and will post your message on the written public comments section on the MidA RPB webpage.

Please continue to contact us with any additional information you may have.

On Wed, May 4, 2016 at 2:33 PM, Kate Morrison - MARCO <kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org> wrote:

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body,

Please note that in November 2015, MARCO convened a meeting of the Stakeholder Liaison Committee. The summary report is attached here for your reference and will be posted to the MARCO website.

Kind regards,

Kate Morrison
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO)

MARCO Stakeholder Liaison Committee Meeting

An opportunity for reflection on the regional planning process

November 20, 2015

Introduction

This document provides an overview of key points from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) Stakeholder Liaison Committee meeting on November 20, 2015 in Annapolis, Maryland. It captures information from discussions regarding stakeholder feedback and comments regarding the regional ocean planning process and specific comments on draft interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) actions. It is organized to provide an overview of roles of meeting participants and describe discussion around the draft IJC actions and more general comments about the regional ocean planning process. This document was developed by Meridian Institute, which facilitated the meeting.

Meeting participants

An asterisk (*) denotes remote participation.

Name	Affiliation	Role in the Mid-Atlantic ocean planning process
Stakeholder Liaison Committee Members and Alternates		
Fatima Ahmad	American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)	Represent the offshore wind industry
Donnie Brown	Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)	Represents the cruise line industry
Sarah Chasis*	NRDC	Represents the environmental conservation community
Alison Chase*	NRDC	Represents the environmental conservation community
Jeff Deem	Recreational Fisherman	Represents the recreational fishing community
Matt Gove*	Surfrider Foundation	Represents the ocean recreation community
Bob Wargo*	North American Submarine Cable Association	Represents the submarine cables industry
Sean Kline	Chamber of Shipping of	Represents the shipping industry

America		
Scott Whitehurst	The Port of Virginia	Represents the ports community
Additional Meeting Participants		
Dustin Antonello*		Public Participant
Mary Boatman*	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	RPB Data Synthesis workgroup co-chair
Gwynn Crichton*	The Nature Conservancy	Public Participant; MARCO Portal Team
Kevin Chu	NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service	RPB Member
Sarah Cooksey	Delaware Coastal Programs	MARCO Management Board member, RPB ROA workgroup co-chair
Greg DiDomenico	Garden State Seafood Association	Public Participant
Brent Greenfield*	National Ocean Policy Coalition	Public Participant
Kevin Hassell	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection	RPB member staff
Anne Hawkins	Fisheries Survival Fund	Public Participant
Kimberly Hernandez	Maryland Department of Natural Resources	RPB member staff
Walter Johnson*		Public Participant
Michael Luisi	MAFMC and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources	RPB Member
Kris Lynch*		Public Participant
Tony MacDonald	Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute	MARCO Data Portal lead
Laura McKay	Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program	MARCO chair; RPB Data Synthesis workgroup co-chair
Jaclyn Murray*		Public Participant
Andy Radford*		Public Participant
Nicole Rodi	Delaware Coastal Programs	RPB member staff
Gwynne Schultz	Maryland Department of Natural Resources	MARCO Management Board member; RPB State Co-lead
Liz Semple	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection	MARCO Management Board member
Doug Simpson	U.S. Coast Guard	RPB Member
Michael Snyder*	New York Department of State	MARCO Management Board, RPB Member
Staff and Advisors		
Kaity Goldsmith	MARCO	MARCO staff
Arlo Hemphill	MARCO	MARCO staff

Ingrid Irigoyen	Meridian Institute	RPB facilitation
Michelle Lennox	MARCO	MARCO staff
Meghan Massaua	Meridian Institute	RPB facilitation
Kate Morrison	MARCO	MARCO staff
Lucas Smith	Meridian Institute	RPB facilitation

Comments on the proposed interjurisdictional coordination actions

After initial welcoming remarks, participants reviewed the [Mid-Atlantic RPB Draft Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions](#). IJC action champions shared updates with members of the SLC, and solicited feedback and questions. Key participant comments and questions about the draft IJC actions are identified below. While an opportunity was provided for participants to comment on each IJC action, some actions received no comments. Below are the main highlights from that discussion.

Tribal Uses

- Support was expressed for the action to convene informal meetings between federal agency officials and tribal representatives to facilitate consultation and build relationships.

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

- Participants expressed interest in the indicators that were under development and how many and which ones might be included in the final Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP).
- Concern was expressed that the concept of “ecologically-rich areas” might be challenging to interpret in the current regulatory framework for fishery management. Specifically, the use of the terminology “making recommendations” was questioned and additional clarification requested, particularly with regard to the appropriate role of the RPB in providing information to inform existing decision making processes versus developing policy recommendations.
- Some participants suggested that the regional ocean planning process should not only identify ecologically rich areas, but also protect them as much as possible under existing authorities.

Offshore Wind

- A participant expressed appreciation for a recent briefing given to the AWEA Offshore Wind Committee (via conference call in October 2015) as well as a breakfast meeting on regional ocean planning co-hosted by MARCO and Northeast Regional Ocean Council (September 2015). In particular, enthusiasm was expressed about the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal and its applicability to industry data needs.

Marine Navigation and Commerce

- Participants expressed support for ongoing discussion on AIS data in the Portal and in making more recent AIS data available. Engagement between the RPB working group and the Portal team resulted in a change to how the density of AIS data is displayed, allowing users to view vessel transits and understand how often vessels go through a specific area.
- The importance of additional stakeholder engagement, particularly with port authorities and associations, was emphasized.

Fisheries Science and Management

- SLC members expressed an interest in being involved as the fisheries-related IJC actions are pursued.
- A question was asked regarding considerations given to the consultation process under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act regarding Essential Fish Habitat.
- The intersection of regional planning and NOAA's ecosystem-based management efforts was discussed.

Stakeholder Engagement

MARCO has conducted a significant number of stakeholder engagement events, such as the *Tug and Barge Industry Roundtable*, staffing a booth at the *White Marlin Open*, attending the *AWEA Offshore WINDPOWER Conference*, sharing data with stakeholders, and conducting webinars to provide information and seek feedback. MARCO also highlighted upcoming events for stakeholder engagement, including the *North Atlantic Port Association* meeting, a December 8 RPB webinar, an open session on data synthesis with the fishing community at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) meeting in Annapolis on December 9, an in-person presentation event on Ocean Assessment and Data Syntheses in Dewey Beach Delaware on January 29, and public comment at the RPB meeting that will be scheduled for March 2016. MARCO emphasized its ability to support members of the Stakeholder Liaison Committee in their efforts to conduct outreach in their communities by providing communication products or Portal demonstrations. Key takeaways of subsequent discussion were:

- Stakeholder engagement events provide an opportunity to engage key stakeholder communities and other members of the public in the regional ocean planning process.
- The Portal team is interested in leveraging pre-existing "How Tuesdays" outreach efforts to conduct more industry-specific Portal trainings.
- Cross-sectoral engagement is helpful, and in-person meetings are an important part of facilitating that engagement. A suggestion offered was for each SLC member to produce

a white paper describing their stakeholder community so that others on the committee would better understand each other's perspectives.

- Interest was expressed in fact-sheets or other short communication documents that could be distributed, possibly on an industry or topic specific basis, in particular to inform people during the draft OAP public comment period in summer 2016. Summary documents on key aspects of the OAP are desired as well.
- Interest in additional public listening sessions during the summer 2016 public comment period was also expressed and that some of these sessions should be held in the evenings to accommodate public participation.

Public Comments

At the end of the session, members of the public were invited to share input on the regional ocean planning process via webinar and in person. Key reflections from the public included:

- Concern was expressed regarding how the OAP might impact the fishing industry. Given the current regulatory environment, additional clarity regarding the role of the RPB and its authority is necessary. There were three main questions:
 - Will the RPB produce additional regulations or cause additional regulations to be made?
 - How will the OAP impact current Fishery Management Plans?
 - Who will judge whether fishing activities are appropriate?
- The need to recognize the particular importance of fishermen as stakeholders in the process was emphasized. The fishing community is a longtime, well established user of the ocean and small changes to policy can result in significant impacts to their ability to make a living.
- It was clarified that the RPB is not a regulatory authority.
- Further clarification regarding ERAs was requested, specifically regarding what criteria any ERA designations would be based on, and under what authorities they would be designated.
- Support was expressed for factoring in the potential of new offshore development, including conventional energy.
- Additional clarification was requested regarding the criteria for membership in the SLC.
- Support was expressed for an elongated comment period on the draft OAP (from 45 days to 90 days).
- A suggestion was made that any regional ocean planning activities continued beyond 2016 should fall under the purview of MARCO and the MAFMC.
- While it is important to provide data, stakeholders also wanted the RPB to take action by identifying solutions to problems and resolving conflicts.
- A reminder was provided on the language in the executive order describing agency responsibilities.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, May 9, 2016 at 8:46 AM
Subject: Fwd: RPB Submission: American Littoral Society letter on draft OAP
To: Sarah Whelan <Sarah@littoralsociety.org>
Cc: Robert LaBelle <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, Gwynne Schultz <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, Kelsey Leonard <treyleonard@gmail.com>

Thank you for sending the attached letter to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body co-leads.

We appreciate the comments you shared about the draft Ocean Action Plan. The RPB will consider all input received, and will post your message on the written public comments section of the RPB website.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have, and please check the RPB website (<http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/>) for information and updates.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sarah Winter** <Sarah@littoralsociety.org>
Date: Fri, May 6, 2016 at 12:42 PM
Subject: RPB Submission: American Littoral Society letter on draft OAP
To: Kelsey Leonard <treyleonard@gmail.com>, "robert.labelle@boem.gov" <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, "gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>

Dear Ms. Leonard, Mr. LaBelle and Ms. Schultz,

On behalf of the American Littoral Society I want to say congratulations on the work you and your fellow Regional Planning Body (RPB) members have accomplished to get our region so close to its first ever draft Ocean Action Plan (OAP). Please find attached a letter detailing our hopes for the OAP development and certification. Please feel free to call or email with any questions.

Best Regards,
Sarah

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society
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Boston, MA 02110
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www.littoralsociety.org



May 6, 2016

Ms. Kelsey Leonard
Shinnecock Indian Nation
P.O. Box 5006
Southampton, New York 11969

Ms. Gwynne Schultz
Senior Coastal and Ocean Policy Advisor
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue, E2
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Mr. Robert LaBelle
Senior Advisor to the Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Submitted electronically

Subject: Recommendations for the Mid-Atlantic draft Ocean Action Plan

Dear Ms. Leonard, Ms. Schultz and Mr. LaBelle,

The American Littoral Society would like to congratulate you on your work thus far to bring the first ever *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* (OAP or Plan) to life. While we applaud the work of the RPB, the RPB must push itself further to ensure that the outcomes of this first ever OAP truly take a bold step toward healthy ocean ecosystems and sustainable uses by identifying the region's "abundance core areas"¹, mapping them, and creating interjurisdictional (IJC) actions to protect them as precursors to the full set of ecologically rich areas that the RPB is working to develop.

Nothing is more central to the mission of the Society than the protection of our ocean and coasts. We know that managing the complex interactions between our ocean ecosystems and human uses can be difficult, but if we cannot take a step toward identifying important places, how can we truly know whether certain human uses are a sustainable part of our Mid-Atlantic ocean?

¹ As discussed by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's (MARCO) marine data and analysis team (MDAT), MDAT team video. *Available at* <http://midatlanticocean.org/mid-atlantic-states-present-ocean-data-products/>

As you know, the *Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force's Final Recommendations* (Final Recommendations), as adopted in Executive Order 13547, includes a Framework for Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) that is meant to:

“improve ecosystem health and services by planning human uses in concert with the conservation of important ecological areas, such as areas of high productivity and biological diversity; areas and key species that are critical to ecosystem function and resiliency; areas of spawning, breeding, and feeding; areas of rare or functionally vulnerable marine resources; and migratory corridors.”²

The Final Recommendations envision that by allowing multiple agencies to look comprehensively at demands for ocean space and important ecological areas, CMSP can lead to the “protection of areas that are essential for the resiliency and maintenance of healthy ecosystem services and biological diversity, and to maximize the ability of marine resources to continue to support a wide variety of human uses.”³

Fulfilling this goal of CMSP necessitates that the Mid-Atlantic region move quickly and efficiently toward identifying its important ecological areas (or ecologically rich areas (ERAs) as coined for this region) so that agencies can then work to protect such areas that are “essential for the resiliency and maintenance of healthy ecosystem services and biological diversity” through their regulatory authorities. The RPB’s own *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework* (Framework) contains a goal to “promote ocean ecosystem health, functionality, and integrity through conservation, protection, enhancement, and restoration”⁴ and an objective to “[f]oster collaboration and coordination for protection and restoration of ocean and coastal habitats that are important for improving ecosystem functioning and maintaining biodiversity”,⁵ both of which support this charge.

Clearly, the RPB has recognized the importance of these goals and objectives, but it has not yet gotten to a place where the region can claim it has fulfilled its self-identified goal. Therefore, the RPB must take the next step and identify the “abundance core areas” in the draft Ocean Action Plan as the first step toward a full set of ecologically rich areas. Not only should the RPB identify these abundance core areas, but also formally map them and develop an RPB policy, as a best practice, that these areas should be protected as areas important for improving ecosystem function and

² *Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force Final Recommendations* (Final Recommendations) at 44. Available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework* (Framework), at 6. Available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework>

⁵ Framework at 7. In full this objective reads: Objective (Discovering, understanding, protecting, and restoring the ocean ecosystem) Enhance understanding of ecosystem functionality and the key roles of Mid-Atlantic ocean habitats and physical, geological, chemical, and biological ocean resources through improved scientific understanding and assessments of naturally occurring processes and changes and the effects of ocean uses. Foster collaboration and coordination for protection and restoration of ocean and coastal habitats that are important for improving ecosystem functioning and maintaining biodiversity.

maintaining biodiversity. The RPB can then develop IJC actions that will protect these areas through the agencies' existing authorities.

Further, the Mid-Atlantic region is facing a host of pressing issues and demands for the use of ocean resources: large scale alternative energy leasing and development, seismic testing in support of oil and gas development and extensive extraction of sand resources to support hazard mitigation projects in coastal areas. The information provided by the scientific analysis currently available to the RPB should be made available for current decision making around these issues.

We all recognize that the Mid-Atlantic Ocean is home to diverse and stunning marine ecosystems, thriving coastal communities and a robust ocean economy and that the health of these communities and our ocean economy *directly* depend upon the health of our region's ocean and coastal resources. With the ever-increasing demands on these resources along with the changes being wrought by climate change there has never been a greater need to identify and protect our region's ecologically special places. We are looking to you, our region's decision makers to do the right thing for the health of our ocean.

Sincerely,



Tim Dillingham
Executive Director

cc: New Jersey Congressional Delegation

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Thu, May 12, 2016 at 2:59 PM
Subject: Re: MidA RPB March meeting summary & next steps
To: jweis@andromeda.rutgers.edu

Thank you for your message to the MidA RPB, and for sharing the NJDEP report on ocean acidification and information about regional marine debris programs. We appreciate your interest about the issues discussed in the Healthy Ocean Ecosystem slides from the March 2016 MidA RPB meeting and will ask the MidA RPB members working on these actions to contact you. We are also sharing your message with the full MidA RPB, and we will post your message to the written public comments section on the MidA RPB webpage.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have.

On Wed, May 11, 2016 at 8:57 PM, Judith S. Weis <jweis@andromeda.rutgers.edu> wrote:
There are two issues discussed in the slide show regarding Healthy Ocean Ecosystem that I can help with. These issues do not yet have a lead entity, but when they do, please notify them of my interest.

(1) Action 3 Ocean Acidification. I chaired a committee of the NJDEP Science Advisory Board that looked into this issue. Our report is available at:

http://www.state.nj.us/dep/sab/SAB%20OA%20Report_FINAL%20Approved%20%2808-12-15%29.pdf

NJ is now monitoring ph whenever and wherever DO measurements are taken.

(2) Action 5 - Marine Debris. I am part of an active consortium of government agencies at the local and state levels, as well as NGOs and other groups brought together under the auspices of EPA Region 2 (NY and NJ) called "Trash-Free Waters." Members of different subgroups are working on plastic bottles, plastic bags, cigarette butts, microplastics, and other categories of debris and have gathered considerable amounts of information - no need for RPB to "re-invent the wheel." I believe the other regional EPA offices have organized similar programs. The EPA contact person in Region 2 is Josh Kogan - kogan.joshua@epa.gov

I look forward to working with RPB on these issues.

Sincerely,
Judith S. Weis
Professor Emerita
Dept. of Biological Sciences

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> <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1108848433345&ca=bc0f30f0-fa19-4fb8-b413-8b108ada5c3a>

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Tue, May 17, 2016 at 9:40 AM
Subject: Re: Public Comments Regarding Draft Ocean Action Plan and Invitation to Upcoming Ocean Planning Panel Discussion on 5/24 in NYC
To: Noah Chesnin <nchesnin@wcs.org>
Cc: BOEM MidAtlanticRPB <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, Merry Camhi <mCamhi@wcs.org>, "Kusa, Rebecca" <rkusa@programs.wcs.org>, Maia Murphy <mkmurphy@wcs.org>

Thank you for sharing the Ocean Planning Activity Summary, Youth Ocean Conservation Summit Ocean Planning Public Comments, and the May 24 Ocean Planning Panel poster with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body.

The members of the Mid-Atlantic RPB commend each and every student who participated in and commented on this realistic exercise in ocean planning. We will take your comments under consideration and will work hard to create a good ocean plan for your use in the future as you enjoy, use and protect our ocean and its resources. Thank you.

The RPB will post your message on the written public comments section of the RPB website. Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have, and please check the RPB website for information and updates.

On Mon, May 16, 2016 at 11:37 AM, Noah Chesnin <nchesnin@wcs.org> wrote:
Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

On behalf of the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium, I wanted to share several documents with you, including:

1. **Ocean Planning Activity Summary:** On Saturday April 16, 2016, 55 high school students from the New York City area attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium. As a part of the conference, the teens participated in an interactive ocean planning game on the Coney Island Beach.
2. **Youth Ocean Conservation Summit Ocean Planning Public Comments:** Based on their experience during the interactive ocean planning game, the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit participants wrote public comment letters to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body concerning the development of the draft Ocean Action Plan.
3. **5.24 Ocean Planning Panel Poster:** The Wildlife Conservation Society is hosting a public facing panel discussion and interactive tech demonstration about ocean planning and conservation on May 24th in New York City. Members of the RPB are welcome to attend. (See attached poster, as well as the text poster below, rsvp requested to NYSeascape@wcs.org).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Noah

Noah S. Chesnin
New York Seascape Policy Program
Manager
Wildlife Conservation Society
1-718-265-7937 / nchesnin
web: www.wcs.org
www.twitter.com/thewcs

**The Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium Presents:
Ocean Planning: Sharing New York's Busy Waters**

Doors at 6:00pm, Event from 6:30-8:30pm
Tuesday, May 24th

Presidential Rooms 2 and 3 (Third Floor)
Columbia University Faculty House
64 Morningside Drive
New York, New York, 10027

RSVP Requested: NYSeascape@wcs.org
Free and Open to the Public
Complimentary refreshments will be served
Bring your laptop or tablet

New York's ocean waters are some of the busiest in the world! How do we ensure a safe place for marine wildlife?

Please join us for a panel discussion and interactive tech demonstration about human use, proactive planning, and conservation of New York's ocean ecosystems. Officials from the **White House** and **New York State** will discuss how ocean planning can promote conservation and sustainable use of our local waters.

Audience members will also get their feet wet trying out the New York Ocean Gateway, a state-of-the-art website providing public access to data, interactive tools, and expert knowledge about New York's marine wildlife and human uses. Bring your laptop or tablet (WCS will also have tablets) and have fun exploring ways to balance shipping, fishing, wind farms and wildlife in our ocean backyard.

Ocean Planning Activity Youth Ocean Conservation Summit

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is working to inspire the next generation of ocean conservation advocates. On Saturday April 16, 2016, 55 high school students from the New York City area attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at WCS's New York Aquarium in Coney Island. The Summit was designed to help build the next generation of ocean conservation leaders and give them opportunities to advocate for conservation among their peers and within their communities. The daylong event, organized by another group of teen leaders from the Wildlife Conservation Society, consisted of a panel discussion focused on careers in wildlife conservation, a keynote speaker, and interactive small-group breakout sessions. Participants also developed their own ocean conservation social media and marketing campaigns that they are taking back to their schools and communities.

During the afternoon, the Wildlife Conservation Society's NY Seascape Program (the conservation program at the New York Aquarium) led an interactive ocean planning game on the Coney Island beach.



Students were assigned roles and given representative props that were handmade by the teen organizers of the summit. Roles included marine stakeholders (e.g., commercial and recreational fishermen, cargo ships, offshore wind developers, research scientists, etc.) and marine wildlife (e.g., whales, sharks, forage fish, turtles, etc.). After an introduction to ocean planning, the students then acted out their assigned roles in the "ocean" that was staked out on the beach. During the first session of the game they moved about based on prompts they received about how their "role" depended on the ocean. A bit of chaos ensued and there was high wildlife mortality and human conflict. Before the

second run of the game, the participants from each stakeholder and marine wildlife group met and negotiated strategies and actions that would decrease negative human / wildlife interactions. For example, the sharks urged fishermen to tag- and-release them, ships and whales discussed the use of shipping lanes, and corals worked with trawlers to reduce fishing activity in Hudson Canyon. With these self-imposed rules, the students sensed a bit more order and balance at sea.

The purpose of the game was to show the students how stakeholders can proactively work together, through ocean planning, to promote a healthy ocean ecosystem and sustainable use of our ocean resources.

Participants learned, firsthand, about the complexities of balancing the needs of marine wildlife and human uses in our increasingly busy ocean. In addition to raising awareness, students learned about civic engagement. Following the game, they were asked to write about something they learned from the exercise about the importance of ocean planning to be shared with decision-makers. Their comments and recommendations will be submitted to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body during the public comment for the Mid Atlantic Ocean Action Plan later this summer (see attached).





YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Cargo Ship. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

After playing the first round with no organization between the ships, fishermen, divers etc. 99% of all the sea life was "killed". For cargo ships, I believe, they should have sensors that detect the ocean life around them.

Scientists should provide whale migrating patterns to ship captains to help them in creating a safe journey for the shipgoers and marine life.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Snorkeler. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Before we spoke about a plan, there were a lot of marine animals in danger and killed in action. After we discussed a plan, we were able to reduce the amount of marine animal deaths. I learned that communication is key to reserve the animals lives and put them at a lower risk of dying and becoming extinct.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Sea Turtle. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Sea turtle in particular face a lot of threats, lots natural and from human activity. ~~People also hunt sea turtles and kill them~~ Already facing threats from predators like sharks, the added risks of getting caught in nets, getting hit by boats, oil spills, etc. are severely detrimental to the sea turtle populations. Ocean planning is very necessary in order to preserve the marine wildlife like turtles.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Scarsdale

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a deep sea coral. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Commercial fishing boats are destroying coral and disturbing wildlife. There should be laws regulating or limited these boats because they are destroying coral and coral are ~~very~~ very important because they serve as a refuge to fish and they are ~~a~~ very beautiful and diverse organisms and area. Also, the boats are disturbing other marine animals such as our wonderful whales.

NAME: _____

CITY: White Plains

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Forage Fish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned that Forage Fish are at the absolute bottom of the food chain.
me and my other fish joked about "trust no one" and "every fish for themselves"
which speaks to how maybe they feel so maybe we should create habitats and
safe areas for forage fish. also I think we need to preserve corals to help hide
the fish.

NAME: _____

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a forage fish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned that ocean planning is very crucial in protecting marine wildlife and habitats I care about. Lessons that I learned ~~from~~ were that conservationists are needed in preserving wildlife where ships pass by because ships can kill marine wildlife and ~~may~~ can even destroy a species of marine life. I also learned that if you do not have a proper ocean planning, it can kill several ~~in~~ marine animals and destroy their ~~with~~ habitats.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn, New York STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Seabird. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learn that in order to protect the marine wildlife and habitats is to have wind turbines spread around so that birds can maneuver their way out of them. If wind turbines are all together birds might get hurt even if they try to maneuver their way.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Springfield Gardens STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Forager Fish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Fish is an important part of the marine ecosystem. Its impact is largely due to the fact that it is at the bottom of the trophic level and therefore serves as a source of food for the majority, if not all of marine animals ex= large fish, shark, and sea turtles. There needs to be more conservation efforts to better protect their dwindling numbers and to facilitate their population growth.

NAME: _____

CITY: New York

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a sea bird. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

What I learned here was that with the proper confidence you can help contribute to protect the environment, and that we need to take care of the environment for future generations.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Cargo Ship. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

One thing I learned would be talking to law enforcement about laws and regulations that Cargo Ships could follow. Another thing I learned would be trying to avoid the migrations of whales by following a certain path they could follow. The last thing I learned would be scientists could make sonar for animals like whales on their boats.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: New York City STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

14

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Forage fish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned that being on the bottom of the food chain sucks, forage fish need to be protected. Their importance to the environment is invaluable. Without them the balance would ~~shift~~ shift and other animals in the food chain would suffer.

NAME:



CITY:

Brooklyn

STATE:

New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a windmill. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

The windmills limited the habitats of some other wildlife. Windmills must be constructed in a way to support wildlife and our blue, aquatic wilderness.

NAME:



CITY:

Athens

STATE:

Georgia



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a swordfish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Everything has its purpose, the ocean included! It takes up 70% of our planet and loads of animals, plants, + people rely on it so much. If we continue to mistreat it and if I don't take a stand, who will?

NAME:



CITY:

Millburn

STATE:

NJ



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Shark. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Sharks' lives are tough. Even though they are an apex predator they are vulnerable to a lot of creations which we invented. Due to over-fishing their food sources are depleting everyday. It's not fair that their chances of living a long, successful life is ruined because of us. Not only are we stealing their food sources, but we are hunting them. This isn't fair and has to stop.

NAME: _____

CITY: _____

NYC, Brooklyn

STATE: _____

New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Deep Sea Coral. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned that the Deep Sea Coral's role in the marine ecosystem is an important one and it is in danger. Deep Sea Coral are found in the deep sea (ex. Hudson Canyon) and take hundred of years to form. They benefit the ecosystem by offering refuge to fish and other organisms. ~~They~~ They are in danger because of the threat of commerial fishing boats (like bottom-trawlers) that may destroy them with their nets. If marine environmentalists and commercial fishing companies can reach a compromise, both will benefit.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Chappaqua

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a wind turbine. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned that the placements of wind turbines can effect the habitats that surround them as well as the behavior of the ~~the~~ sea life. I learned that it is important to plan their placements so that they don't cause damage or have any negative effects on their surroundings

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

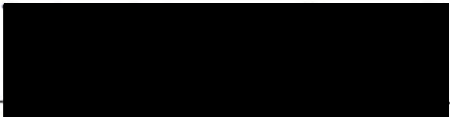
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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a commercial fishing boat. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Some lessons I learned ~~was~~ were that CFB's need to organize themselves in a way that wouldn't kill as many animals but we'll get enough food for ourselves. With a plan we can even out the human interaction with the fish. It's a win-win situation for both.

NAME:



CITY:

Bronx

STATE:

New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Bull Terrier / Tuny. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

IF human interaction kills off the big fish then nothing keeps the little fish in check and vice versa. IF that structure crumbles then the ecosystem is destroyed

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: New York City

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

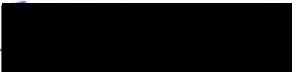
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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a dolphin. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Ocean planning is an important part of protecting wildlife. Within the game, once human influences (cargo ships, fishing rigs, etc) were restricted, fewer organisms were killed and at a much slower rate. If this idea of working with fishers and ~~fish~~ ^{companies} is applied to a larger scale across the world, then many of the animals in danger could be protected.

NAME: _____



CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a recreational diver. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Ocean planning is important because by having the different human influences (fishing boats, barges, snorkelers, etc.) plan around the wildlife it is given a much bigger chance of survival which benefits everyone. If the fish are all killed off it affects everyone as the whole ecosystem collapses and the humans no longer have fish to eat, watch, and to study.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Yonkers

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a cargo ship. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Regulating cargo ships are extremely important because without regulations they travel in waters that are highly populated with whales and other wildlife and this disrupts their lives and migration patterns. Lawenforcers can help keep them in order to ensure they're not being disruptive to the wildlife. Commerical fishermen also have trouble fishing and making a living when cargo ships are dominating the waters. It's important that regulations are put in place for this reason.

NAME: _____

CITY: Queens

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Forage fish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Forage fish is important to marine wildlife and habitats because they are prey for nearly every animal. Without them, the "animal web" would not flourish. Therefore, humans would not survive, due to pollution and animal endangering.

NAME:



CITY:

Flushing

STATE:

New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a deep sea coral. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

The sea holds so many forms of life. That precious life has the right to be protected by all of us (humans). Without them, we would lose alot of resources needed for survival!

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Bronx

STATE: N.Y



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a deep sea coral. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Although in the short term it is tempting to exploit all the ocean's resources, the long term costs of overcrowding the ocean far outweigh the initial sources of income. Travelling cargo ships, wind turbines, and other human installations crowding the ocean in a way that is unorganized or unconscious of ^{the potential} damage to the ecosystem will inevitably harm humans later on. We have more than some fish to worry about, but countless indisposible species with significant ecological consequences.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a scientist. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Being a scientist, we had to be gentle with animals. Even though we thought we weren't trying to kill them we still hit them with our ships. But we had to make a way not to touch them.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Rosedale

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Billfish/Tuna. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

It's important for the boats to learn
where the organisms live to
reduce hitting and killing them.

NAME:



CITY:

Wappingers Falls

STATE:

New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a sea bird. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

① When there is no planning and only each person worrying about their own needs, most ~~only~~ marine life do die or get hurt.

② Further planning and understanding how the interest of the people ~~could~~ and the effects of the ~~marine~~ marine life will ~~be~~ cause less marine animals will be killed by people.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a forage fish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

There needs to be more conservation amendments to help
protect forage fish because they are at the base of
wildlife in the ocean. People need to be more aware
of the importance of forage fish so raise awareness.

NAME:



CITY:

Brooklyn

STATE:

New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Turtle. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

is that people only see turtle as life creatures. However, they don't realize that turtles face many threats whether it being ~~too~~ species that eat them or humanmade objects just as boats can impact them ~~negat~~ negatively and protecting there habitat can help them alot

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: New York City STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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I attended the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium where I learned about your work to develop a regional ocean action plan. Please do everything you can to identify and protect ecologically rich areas in the Mid-Atlantic, including deep sea canyons like New York's Hudson Canyon.

At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Recreational Fishing Boat. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

~~I learned~~ I learned that the more that I caught, the less amount of fish there will be in the sea. The best way to stop this from happening is the catch and release method. That way, there will be more fish in the sea.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Brooklyn

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

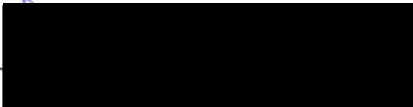
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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Dolphin. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned that its possible to hurt animals that you didnt even know were there. Big ships dont really know when they are hitting animals b/c they are so small compared to the ship. also, the ships are interrupting the migration of the animals, not the other way around.

NAME:



CITY:

Brooklyn

STATE:

NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Porage fish. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

People don't know their limits. They think that they can go into territories where they are not allowed and in doing so, they have hurt wildlife and stayed beyond their welcome. It's important to realize this before ~~we~~ our actions become irreversible.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Queens Village STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Fishing Boat. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned that before you go fishing you need to come up with a plan beforehand so that one you arent just killing off innocent species, two you are not just benefiting yourself but of everyone too. This way everyone live a peace-ful life. We can come up with breeding areas where we can fish and restrict area where we are restricted, so that everyone thing is organized and not crash together.

NAME: _____

CITY: Bronx,

STATE: New York.



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

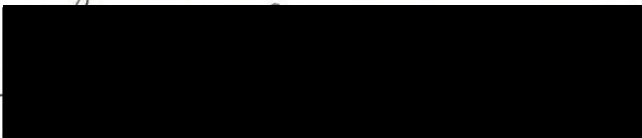
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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Recreational Fishing boat. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

It's important because if fishers don't take control over the amount of fishes that they catch, soon there'll be any left, and more when we catch those kind of fishes that don't reproduce a large amount of babies. Maybe some ~~Fish~~ seafood companies will not take care about it because of the money that they could lose, but that's why we should do something to regulate it and that ~~can~~ could be the practice of more catchmentalism.

NAME:



CITY:

Queens

STATE:

New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a large ship. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

How disruptive shipping lanes can be, and how
of them

Vital organizations is to the wellbeing of the
environment

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: New York

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Members,

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Whale Watcher. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Even in such a large and diverse ecosystem as an ocean, many of our largest animals, such as whales, are incredibly hard to find. The effects of this were felt in the ocean planning game, as my whale watching business would have gone bankrupt from a lack of wildlife.

NAME [REDACTED]

CITY: NYC

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Diver. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

I learned about the importance of balance in all things. Humans need to learn to find balance with all things human not human and even living and not living

NAME:



CITY:

Brooklyn

STATE:

NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Commercial Fishing Boat. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Before I went into this game, I knew the lesson it was trying to teach: that it's very complicated to create sailing patterns that benefit the fishermen, and let the fish population be sustained. There must be guidelines for how many fish can be caught during certain time periods. It's very hard to execute plans because of ocean topography and fish migrating patterns.

NAME:



Town:
City:

Somers, NY

STATE:

New York

County: Westchester



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Squid. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

This exercise demonstrated the incredibly harmful effects that humans can ~~cause~~ ^{have} on wildlife. As a squid, almost everything could damage me and the entire group I was with was wiped out very quickly. Furthermore, there ~~were~~ ^{were} ~~few~~ ^{few} consequences felt by humans. This was demonstrated in the lack of casualties suffered among boats but the immense damage caused to animals.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Northport

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

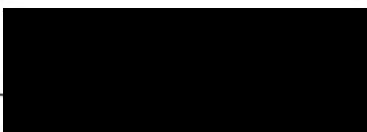
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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Coastal ~~guard~~ ^{guard}. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

The canyon was greatly effected by cargo ships and I feel like there should be more laws to protect wildlife from all ships. I also feel like to minimize oil spills we can make hybrid ships will reduce oil spills.

NAME:



CITY:

Bronx

STATE:

New York



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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Scientist. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Even though you're a scientist
and protect animals, you're
ships can still kill animals that
live in the ocean.

NAME:



CITY:

Fair Lawn

STATE:

NJ



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Squid. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

- You have to stick together with your little creatures.
- When you are near other organisms then you get eaten.
- You die very easily!!
- Anything you do, you get killed first
- You don't eat a lot as a squid.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: Bronx

STATE: NY



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

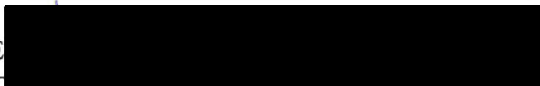
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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a shark. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

Some lessons I learned were magnetic fields from wind turbines can harm wildlife especially sharks since they are sensitive to magnetic fields. One ~~other~~ other lesson I learned was the ~~variety~~ variety of animals that live around our home town and how we need to protect them.

NAME



CITY: Bronx

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Bullfish/Tuna. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

What may seem like a simple human action may cause a chain reaction, killing many animals and making whole species go extinct. Although Sharks naturally feed on ^{Bullfish and Tuna} during the game I was actually 'killed' by a ~~fish~~ fishing boat going by. I learned that marine life is not only eaten (and killed), they are also harmed by various chemicals as well as fishing lines and hooks humans introduce into their environment. This is something we must change.

NAME: [REDACTED]

CITY: New York City

STATE: New York



YOUTH OCEAN CONSERVATION SUMMIT

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At the Summit, I participated in the ocean planning game as a Cargo Ship. Here are some lessons I learned about why ocean planning is important to protecting the marine wildlife and habitats I care about:

As a cargo ship, your main goal is to safely transport cargo from one place to another. However, we face many difficulties, we have to work closely with law enforcement, field scientists, local fishermen and divers, and most importantly marine life. We have to plan out paths that don't affect or disturb ~~any~~ any of the wildlife and other commuters.

NAME: _____

CITY: Bronx

STATE: Ny



The Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium Presents

OCEAN PLANNING: SHARING NEW YORK'S BUSY WATERS

TUESDAY, MAY 24

6:30 - 8:30PM

(DOORS OPEN AT 6:00PM)

PRESIDENTIAL ROOMS 2 AND 3 (THIRD FLOOR)

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY FACULTY HOUSE

64 MORNINGSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, NY, 10027

RSVP REQUESTED: NYSEASCAPE@WCS.ORG FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED. BRING YOUR LAPTOP OR TABLET.

New York's ocean waters are some of the busiest in the world! How do we ensure a safe place for marine wildlife?

Please join us for a panel discussion and interactive tech demonstration about human use, pro-active planning, and conservation of New York's ocean ecosystems. Officials from the **White House** and **New York State** will discuss how ocean planning can promote conservation and sustainable use of our local waters.

Audience members will also get their feet wet trying out the New York Ocean Gateway, a state-of-the-art website providing public access to data, interactive tools, and expert knowledge about New York's marine wildlife and human uses. [Bring your laptop or tablet](#) (WCS will also have tablets) and have fun exploring ways to balance shipping, fishing, wind farms and wildlife in our ocean backyard.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 10:27 AM
Subject: Fwd: RPB Submission on Stakeholder Engagement and the draft OAP
To: Sarah Whelan <sarah@littoralsociety.org>
Cc: Robert LaBelle <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, Gwynne Schultz <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>

Thank you for sending the letter to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body co-leads that was signed by representatives of stakeholder groups.

We appreciate your recommendations about the upcoming stakeholder engagement opportunities during the public comment period for the draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. The RPB will consider all input received, and will post your message on the written public comments section of the RPB website.

Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have, and please check the RPB website (<http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/>) for information and updates.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **LaBelle, Robert** <robert.labelle@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 3, 2016 at 9:40 AM
Subject: Fwd: RPB Submission on Stakeholder Engagement and the draft OAP
To: BOEM MidAtlanticRPB <midatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Cc: Leann Bullin <Leann.Bullin@boem.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sarah Winter** <Sarah@littoralsociety.org>
Date: Thu, Jun 2, 2016 at 11:16 AM
Subject: RPB Submission on Stakeholder Engagement and the draft OAP
To: Robert LaBelle <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, Gwynne Schultz <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>

Dear Mr. LaBelle, Ms. Schultz, and Ms. Leonard,

On behalf of the American Littoral Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, Ocean Conservancy, Surfrider Foundation, and Wild Oceans, we want to say congratulations on the work you and your fellow Regional Planning Body (RPB) members have accomplished to get our region so close to its first ever draft Ocean Action Plan (OAP). Please find attached a letter detailing our hopes for the public and stakeholder engagement opportunities during the draft OAP comment period. Please feel free to call or email any of us with questions.

Best Regards,
Sarah

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society
(c) 503.267.9577
www.littoralsociety.org

**The American Littoral Society * Natural Resources Defense Council
Ocean Conservancy * Surfrider Foundation * Wild Oceans**

June 2, 2016

Ms. Kelsey Leonard
Shinnecock Indian Nation
P.O. Box 5006
Southampton, New York 11969

Ms. Gwynne Schultz
Senior Coastal and Ocean Policy Advisor
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue, E2
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Mr. Robert LaBelle
Senior Advisor to the Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Submitted electronically

Subject: Recommendations for the Draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Release

Dear Ms. Leonard, Ms. Schultz and Mr. LaBelle,

Congratulations to you and the entire Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (Mid-Atlantic RPB) for being just a few steps away from completing our first-ever *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* (OAP). The release of the draft OAP in June will signal the *final* opportunity for significant public engagement before the RPB finalizes the OAP and we urge you to make this last public comment period as robust as possible. In addition to receiving comment letters, the RPB should allow official opportunities for the public and stakeholders to engage with the RPB in a hearing or listening session format.

One such mechanism to solicit information on the draft OAP is to host public hearings or listening sessions. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) routinely utilizes hearings as one way to solicit stakeholder information on important Council management actions, like Fishery Management Plans.¹ Given the OAP's importance, events similar to a hearing would be a useful and appropriate engagement tool. Many of us found the listening sessions that were held to hammer

¹ *Statement of Organization Practice and Procedures of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council*, Section 3.2 Hearings, at 21-22, available at http://static1.squarespace.com/static/511cdc7fe4b00307a2628ac6/t/56e32886b6aa60415bb5a1f7/1457727623819/2016-02-11_MAFMC-SOPP-Final.pdf

out the draft *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework* to be excellent in terms of soliciting dialogue with the public and officially collecting feedback through the Executive Summary that was produced; we urge you to follow a similar format for this round of engagement.² For example, these listening sessions featured time for stakeholders to ask questions or make comments, and, importantly, receive feedback from RPB members on those questions and comments as well as hear the comments from their fellow stakeholders.

As you well know, stakeholder engagement and public participation are crucial to successful coastal and marine spatial planning. The *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* emphasizes the “importance of frequent and robust stakeholder, scientific and public engagement throughout the planning process.”³ The *Final National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan* notes “[r]obust stakeholder engagement and public participation are essential to ensure that actions are based on a full understanding of the range of interests and interactions that occur in each region.”⁴ The National Ocean Council’s *Marine Planning Handbook* confirms “engagement and substantive participation of stakeholders and the public” is a “cornerstone of marine planning[.]”⁵ With this significant action of a draft OAP release, it is particularly important that public engagement be encouraged in as many ways as possible.

We thank you for promising a webinar release and for hosting open houses in many of the Mid-Atlantic States. We appreciate that many of these dates, times, and locations have been announced early so that interested parties can plan to attend. As you shape the agendas for the open houses, we strongly urge you to ensure that the format follows that of a hearing or listening session. To increase transparency and a feeling of community discussion, the opportunity for stakeholders to hear other stakeholders' comments should be granted. These open houses can ensure robust engagement by allowing residents of the Mid-Atlantic region who may not be comfortable constructing a formal comment letter to share their feedback with the RPB in a public manner, heard by all, knowing their participation will be officially considered in completing the final OAP.

We appreciate your attention to these recommendations for a strong OAP release, and welcome any questions you may have. We look forward to reviewing the draft OAP and attending and encouraging turnout for public comment at the region-wide open houses.

² See, <http://www.boem.gov/MidA-RPB-Public-Listening-Sessions/>

³ *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* at 7-8, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf.

⁴ National Ocean Council, *National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan* (April, 2013) at 23, available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans/implementationplan>.

⁵ National Ocean Council, *Marine Planning Handbook* (July 2013), at 5, available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/final_marine_planning_handbook.pdf.

Sincerely,

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

Anne Merwin
Director, Ocean Planning
Ocean Conservancy

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Pam Lyons Gromen
Executive Director
Wild Oceans

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Sep 30, 2016 at 9:59 AM
Subject: Fwd: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: nikkidney@aol.com

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the FRN, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nicole Harris** <feedback@lcv.org>
Date: Tue, Sep 13, 2016 at 12:12 PM
Subject: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Sep 13, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

The Mid-Atlantic's ocean and bays are beautiful places for families to visit, swim, and fish. Our region's ocean is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. And offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

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With these additions to the Plan, I know our region will take a big step forward toward a healthier Atlantic Ocean.

Sincerely,

Nicole Harris
574 Anderson Ave
Cliffside Park, NJ 07010-1732
nikkidney@aol.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Sep 30, 2016 at 10:01 AM
Subject: Fwd: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Ellen Mc Connell <cats4all@optonline.net>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ellen Mc Connell** <feedback@lcv.org>
Date: Tue, Sep 13, 2016 at 12:41 PM
Subject: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Sep 13, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

The Mid-Atlantic's ocean and bays are beautiful places for families to visit, swim, and fish. Our region's ocean is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. And offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

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Sincerely,

Ellen Mc Connell
14 Winsor Ct
Sayreville, NJ 08872-1371
cats4all@optonline.net

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Sep 30, 2016 at 10:01 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Ann Tung <reeseowl@yahoo.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Wed, Sep 14, 2016 at 12:44 AM, Ann Tung <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Sep 13, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

The Mid-Atlantic's ocean and bays are beautiful places for families to visit, swim, and fish. Our region's ocean is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. And offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

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With these additions to the Plan, I know our region will take a big step forward toward a healthier Atlantic Ocean.

Sincerely,

Ann Tung
596 Stangle Rd
Martinsville, NJ 08836-2353
reeseowl@yahoo.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Sep 30, 2016 at 10:03 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: eric biemuller <ebiemuller@mail.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Thu, Sep 15, 2016 at 4:17 PM, eric biemuller <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Sep 15, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

The Mid-Atlantic's ocean and bays are beautiful places for families to visit, swim, and fish. Our region's ocean is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. And offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

As our ocean faces growing challenges of pollution, loss of habitat, and competing industrial uses, it's critical the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan ensure a healthy ocean today and in the future. I applaud the RPB on its work to complete this first-ever draft Ocean Action Plan. I hope you will incorporate these recommendations below that will make this Plan stronger and more reflective of me, as an ocean user and coastal citizen.

The Final Ocean Action Plan must:

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- Set a short, definitive deadline - ideally by the end of this year - to identify and post on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal areas offshore that are important for the health of marine life (ecologically rich areas or ERAs). The Plan should also articulate agency commitments to ensure that ocean management decisions conserve the ecosystem values and functions that ERAs contain.
- Strengthen Federal agency commitments to the Plan's tools for coordinating agency decisions. It is unacceptable that even a few actions outlined in the draft Plan do not have a lead federal agency or tasks the entire RPB with overseeing implementation.

With these additions to the Plan, I know our region will take a big step forward toward a healthier Atlantic Ocean. Make sure recreational anglers take precedence over commercial fishermen!

Sincerely,

eric biemuller
posted box 475
crosswicks, NJ 08515-0475
ebiemuller@mail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Sep 19, 2016 at 12:49 PM
Subject: Re: Comments
To: ERIC JOHANSSON <safemariner@me.com>

Thank you for submitting comments related to the maritime industry issues presented in the draft ocean plan. Given the comments were submitted after the September 6 Federal Register Notice deadline, the MidA RPB will instead consider these additional recommendations in the course of plan implementation.

On Mon, Sep 19, 2016 at 8:49 AM, ERIC JOHANSSON <safemariner@me.com> wrote:
To whom it may concern:

Please find attached comments which I understand are late in delivery and hope that they can be added.

Best regards,

Eric Johansson

ERIC JOHANSSON

safemariner@me.com M: 631-766-8571

To the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

As a third generation Port of NY/NJ Tug Captain as well as a Professor at SUNY Maritime, I am one of the 31,000 New York City residents who earn their livelihood in the maritime industry. The Port of NY/NJ is the largest on the East Coast, third largest in the nation, and will rise again as the largest in the United States. In 2014, the Port of NY/NY moved over \$200 billion worth of cargo and worked hard to prepare for larger ships and greater cargo movements. We are proud to boast about our accomplishments, but we are well aware of the future challenges we face as an industry. Our oceans are getting busier, and a tool like ocean planning can help coordinate and plan for these upcoming changes and emerging uses to ensure safe navigation sea-lanes. That is why I am pleased to submit these comments on the draft Ocean Action Plan, and express my support to the RPB on your work thus far.

I congratulate your work on this draft Ocean Action Plan, a first for the region, and a welcomed first take at improving data and information for decision-making, engagement of ocean users early in the decision-making process, and increasing communication between federal agencies, state and tribal governments, the fisheries management council, and ocean users. For the safety and security of our mariners, communication and transparency are critical, and we thank the RPB for attempting to improve this through multiple channels. While I am pleased to see these efforts articulated throughout the Plan, there are specific areas where I would like to submit comments on, which I have outlined below.

1. Provide relevant updates to the Maritime Commerce Subchapter

I applaud the RPB on your efforts to detail out actions related to the maritime commerce sector. I would like to provide comments on the following sections:

Chapter 2.4.5 Action 2: Maintain reliable ocean use data sets relevant to navigation

Operating with the best available information is critical, not only for better decision-making, but for safety in operation and personnel. I am pleased to see the USCG and DOT make commitments to annually review data layers available in the data portal. However, I would like to see more clarity in how both agencies plan to develop review processes, including a clearer timeline for completion. Further, I encourage the USCG and DOT to articulate how they plan to annually provide information regarding data updates to RPB member entities, so that progress can be monitored and evaluated over time. Overall, *I encourage the continued refreshment of data to ensure the maritime industry is kept relevant in the data portal and relevant planning documents.* It is imperative, for example, that Automatic Identification System (AIS) data be maintained. While I understand that data collection and management is costly, AIS must be a priority to identify current and forecasted marine trade routes.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body has provided the Tug & Barge Industry an opportunity to share our information, voice our concerns and offer our suggestions on how to best manage our ocean spaces moving forward. Through the planning process, we were able to provide valuable data on our industry, including information on future trends, which will be critical to future management decisions. Having the best available data publicly available on the ocean data portal is beneficial to the public, mariners, managers and other offshore businesses. We have invested our own time and effort to contribute to this planning process and data sharing. I encourage to RPB to continue to do the same, *ensuring long-term financial security for the portal*, so that it will remain a valuable resource for our industry and others that may impact us, in the future.

Chapter 2.4.5 Action 3: Catalogue intersections between entities whose authorities influence marine commerce and navigation and identify opportunities for improved coordination

The Regional Planning Body is correct to highlight the complex interagency environment the maritime commerce industry operates in. *I applaud the RPB for focusing on how agencies will work better together and urge them to uphold these commitments.* The USCG and DOT specifically list out steps to accomplish this goal, which I think could be modified for detail and clarity. I request the Plan be modified to:

- Clearly identify how the agencies will *'catalogue interagency coordination agreements that influence or are influenced by navigation'* and where this information will be housed. I would encourage this information to be posted on the data portal for easy access;
 - Allow the maritime community to review the *'list of coordination gaps and other information to review'* and update the Plan's language to reflect this change; and,
 - Update the annual review process on *'coordination practices pertinent to ocean uses that influence navigation'* to include not only RPB membership, but the industry writ large, in an effort to conform to the Plan's stated stakeholder engagement goals.
- 2. Incorporate the Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study (ACPARS) in the final Ocean Action Plan, and within the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal.**

The Port of New York and New Jersey receive vessels that travel along the Atlantic Coast maritime highways and beyond. With the release of the Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study (ACPARS) this past spring, I would encourage the RPB to incorporate by reference the recommendations laid out in that study in the Plan, as well as on the data portal. This information will be valuable for the offshore wind industry in particular, providing clearly defined traffic routes, sizes, and locations. While leases offshore New Jersey have already been distributed, *I urge the RPB to expedite the incorporation of this information in to the Plan and Portal,* to ensure proper project siting and planning.

3. Ensure stakeholder engagement continues through Plan implementation

The maritime industry has a significant interest in federal actions that could affect the industry and environment. When decisions are made that could impact our industry, like altered shipping lanes, siting of wind farms, dredging for sand, and many others, the likelihood of impacts to the port and the commerce industry is high, including costs, safety, and environmental footprint on our industry. As these decisions are made, it is crucial that the Ocean Action Plan commit to agencies' understanding potential impacts on our industry and to engaging industry representatives early in the decision-making process to help identify and resolve potential problems. *I strongly encourage the RPB to honor their early stakeholder engagement commitments outlined within the Plan.*

4. Updates to the Regional Ocean Assessment

The Mid-Atlantic has produced a valuable resource called the Regional Ocean Assessment, which outlines the economic impact of various industries in the region, including the ports and maritime sector. The utility of this information is broad and potentially far reaching, from assessments for project permitting, to understanding the relative influence of different industries operating in the region. Additionally, attention is paid to the expansion of the Panama Canal, and subsequently the shifts in container ships that are expected to come through the canal and into the Atlantic ports in the coming years. Maintaining this information through narrative form is a beneficial complement to the data portal and commitments made in the Plan itself. Our industry is rapidly changing alongside other industries, and ensuring these changes are updated is essential to guide agencies in their future decision-making and project development, especially as it might pertain to the

commerce industry. *Whether updated in the assessment or within the Plan itself, I encourage the RPB to keep the maritime trends and information current.*

I wish to thank you in advance for your considerations to our needs and look forward to continuing to engage in this regional planning process. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at safemariner@me.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Oct 3, 2016 at 7:28 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Roland Patterson <rolandpp@aol.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Sat, Oct 1, 2016 at 8:53 AM, Roland Patterson <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Oct 1, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

The Mid-Atlantic's ocean and bays are beautiful places for families to visit, swim, and fish. Our region's ocean is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. And offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

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With these additions to the Plan, I know our region will take a big step forward toward a healthier Atlantic Ocean.

Sincerely,

Roland Patterson
63 Cranbury Neck Rd
Cranbury, NJ 08512-2815
rolandpp@aol.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Oct 3, 2016 at 7:28 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Ibn-Umar Abbasparker <mubarak0512@hotmail.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Sun, Oct 2, 2016 at 1:36 AM, Ibn-Umar Abbasparker <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Oct 2, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

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Sincerely,

Ibn-Umar Abbasparker
11 John St
Sayreville, NJ 08872-1523
mubarak0512@hotmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Oct 12, 2016 at 7:33 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Carol Abrams <lucyray1@comcast.net>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Tue, Oct 11, 2016 at 4:34 PM, Carol Abrams <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Oct 11, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

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Sincerely,

Carol Abrams
351 S Egg Harbor Rd
Blue Anchor, NJ 08037-9441
lucyray1@comcast.net

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Oct 21, 2016 at 7:56 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Brian Reynolds <socialistbri@gmail.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Thu, Oct 20, 2016 at 8:25 PM, Brian Reynolds <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Oct 20, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

The Mid-Atlantic's ocean and bays are beautiful places for families to visit, swim, and fish. Our region's ocean is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. And offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

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Sincerely,

Brian Reynolds
3 S Iowa Ave Apt 1a
Atlantic City, NJ 08401-6330
socialistbri@gmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Oct 26, 2016 at 7:32 AM
Subject: Re: RPB Submission on Stakeholder Engagement and the OAP NOC Submission
To: Sarah Winter <Sarah@littoralsociety.org>
Cc: Robert LaBelle <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, Gwynne Schultz <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "Chase, Alison" <achase@nrdc.org>, Noah Chesnin <nchesnin@wcs.org>, Matt Gove <mgove@surfrider.org>, "plgromen@wildoceans.org" <plgromen@wildoceans.org>

Thank you for the October 21, 2016 letter to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Co-Leads requesting that the MidA RPB host a stakeholder webinar about the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. The Co-Leads appreciated and considered your recommendations.

The MidA RPB is working to finalize the Ocean Action Plan for submission to the National Ocean Council in the very near future. The MidA RPB appreciates all stakeholders and members of the public who provided [comments](#) and participated throughout the Plan development process. The MidA RPB considered all input received during the 60-day public comment period and during the [open house public listening sessions](#) hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) throughout the region during July. The MidA RPB is preparing a detailed response to comments document that describes the public input and revisions to the Plan; those materials will be posted on the MidA RPB [website](#).

And, in response to your request, the MidA RPB will soon invite all interested stakeholders to a public webinar to share insights about the revisions to the Ocean Action Plan and the next steps for implementation. We value stakeholder engagement and encourage you to participate.

The MidA RPB will post your letter on the written public comments section of the MidA RPB website. Please continue to contact us with any additional suggestions you may have, and please check the MidA RPB [website](#) for information and updates.

On Fri, Oct 21, 2016 at 5:30 PM, Sarah Winter <Sarah@littoralsociety.org> wrote:
Dear Ms. Schultz, Ms. Leonard, and Mr. LaBelle,

On behalf of the American Littoral Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Surfrider Foundation, Wild Oceans and the Wildlife Conservation Society we want to say congratulations on the work you and your fellow Regional Planning Body (RPB) members have accomplished in the region's first ever draft Ocean Action Plan (OAP). Please find attached a letter detailing our hope for the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to connect with the RPB on the OAP you will submit to the National Ocean Council. Please feel free to call or email any of us with questions.

Best Regards,
Sarah

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society
(c) 503.267.9577
www.littoralsociety.org

October 21, 2016

Ms. Kelsey Leonard
Shinnecock Indian Nation
P.O. Box 5006
Southampton, New York 11969

Ms. Gwynne Schultz
Senior Coastal and Ocean Policy Advisor
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue, E2
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Mr. Robert LaBelle
Senior Advisor to the Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Submitted electronically

Subject: Stakeholder Webinar for Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan

Dear Ms. Leonard, Ms. Schultz and Mr. LaBelle,

Congratulations to you and the entire Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (Mid-Atlantic RPB or RPB) for being just a step away from completing the first-ever *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* (OAP or Plan). The anticipated imminent submission of the OAP to the National Ocean Council will cap more than three years of work by RPB members and stakeholders to bring this Plan to fruition. It is therefore a perfect opportunity for the Mid-Atlantic RPB to host a webinar that will give stakeholders insight into the changes incorporated into the OAP you will submit.

As you well know, stakeholder engagement and public participation are crucial to successful coastal and marine spatial planning. The *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* emphasizes the “importance of frequent and robust stakeholder, scientific, and public engagement throughout the planning process.”¹ With this significant action of the OAP submission, it is particularly important that the public understands the changes made ***in response to the comments they submitted*** between the draft OAP and the version you will now send to the National Ocean Council.

As stakeholders, we found the recent update webinar hosted by the Northeast Regional Planning Body to be an important planning “check in” point. It allowed stakeholders to understand where the draft *Northeast Ocean Plan* was headed in response to public comments, why the RPB made those changes, and to ask

¹ *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* at 8, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf.

clarifying questions.² The last opportunity Mid-Atlantic ocean planning stakeholders had to hear about its draft Plan was during the open house listening sessions hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean in July. It would be helpful to hear how these summer meetings influenced RPB members and how the Plan has changed over the past 3 months.

It is important for stakeholders to feel invested in the Plan as it changes hands from the RPB to the National Ocean Council. We urge you to consider this request and appreciate your attention to this time sensitive matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Pam Lyons Gromen
Executive Director
Wild Oceans

Merry Camhi, PhD
Director, New York Seascape
Wildlife Conservation Society
New York Aquarium

² Details *available at* <http://neooceanplanning.org/events/september-2016-webinar/>.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Thu, Nov 17, 2016 at 8:06 AM
Subject: Re: MidAtlantic Regional PLanning Body
To: john prince <jhprince@verizon.net>

Thank you for the message. We will share this information with the MidA RPB and post it on our website.

On Thu, Nov 17, 2016 at 7:31 AM, john prince <jhprince@verizon.net> wrote:

More info that may be helpful: <http://www.southatlanticlcc.org>

John Prince
www.prince-landscapes.com
www.facebook.com/PrinceLandscapes/

757-332-1562

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Nov 28, 2016 at 7:25 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Jacqui Lipschitz <jacwayne@rochester.rr.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Sun, Nov 27, 2016 at 8:00 AM, Jacqui Lipschitz <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Nov 27, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

The Mid-Atlantic's ocean and bays are beautiful places for families to visit, swim, and fish. Our region's ocean is also an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. And offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

As our ocean faces growing challenges of pollution, loss of habitat, and competing industrial uses, it's critical the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan ensure a healthy ocean today and in the future. I applaud the RPB on its work to complete this first-ever draft Ocean Action Plan. I hope you will incorporate these recommendations below that will make this Plan stronger and more reflective of me, as an ocean user and coastal citizen.

The Final Ocean Action Plan must:

- Develop a robust and effective process for engaging stakeholders in Plan implementation. Right now the draft Plan's public involvement strategies are vague and variable. Stakeholders, project proponents and agencies will all benefit through a consistent, uniform engagement strategy.
- Set a short, definitive deadline - ideally by the end of this year - to identify and post on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal areas offshore that are important for the health of marine life (ecologically rich areas or ERAs). The Plan should also articulate agency commitments to ensure that ocean management decisions conserve the ecosystem values and functions that ERAs contain.
- Strengthen Federal agency commitments to the Plan's tools for coordinating agency decisions. It is unacceptable that even a few actions outlined in the draft Plan do not have a lead federal agency or tasks the entire RPB with overseeing implementation.

With these additions to the Plan, I know our region will take a big step forward toward a healthier Atlantic Ocean.

Sincerely,

Jacqui Lipschitz
85 Boniface Dr
Rochester, NY 14620-3333
jacwayne@rochester.rr.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Dec 12, 2016 at 7:30 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Brian Valachovic <bvalachovic@verizon.net>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Fri, Dec 9, 2016 at 1:34 PM, Brian Valachovic <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Dec 9, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

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With these additions to the Plan, I know our region will take a big step forward toward a healthier Atlantic Ocean.

Sincerely,

Brian Valachovic
285 Mill Rd
Burlington, NJ 08016-3169
bvalachovic@verizon.net