



Making Smart Choices for a Healthy Ocean: Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Helps the Ocean and Communities Thrive



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Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning is a tool for looking at the big picture and working together to make smart choices for a healthy ocean and economy.

Ocean Congestion, Conflict, and Confusion

Marine spatial planning offers an opportunity to chart the future, ensuring the needs of all are met and that human uses of the waterfront are protected.

- Kurt Nagle, President & CEO, American Association of Port Authorities, Alexandria, VA

Our 21st century economy relies heavily on the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes. That means wind farms and other energy facilities, commercial fishing, recreation, and shipping are all competing to use the same waters, including environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat. Without comprehensive, coordinated planning, we end up with ocean congestion and conflict that can harm our ocean environment and thwart our ocean economy.

For decades, a regulatory thicket of more than 20 different federal agencies and over 140 laws have addressed the management of our coasts and ocean, each primarily focused on a single sector or issue. This has created confusion for ocean users. The recently established National Ocean Council will coordinate these agencies and their implementation of laws, an essential change if we are to understand and better manage the many choices we make about the ocean that affect the entire ecosystem.

Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning: Better Coordination and Smart, Balanced Choices

Making smart, balanced choices will help our ocean and communities thrive. By taking a step back, listening to stakeholders, and looking at the big picture, decision makers will have better-informed choices about how to preserve a healthy ocean and thriving economy. This approach, called Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) is simply a guide along the way. For businesses, conservationists, and community members, this tool is critical for listening to stakeholders and working with agencies to plan for the future.

How will Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning help?

- **Averting Congestion and Conflict:** We are demanding more from our ocean space: more energy, more food, and more recreational opportunities. Without a coordinated, big picture plan, we risk chaos and conflict. A new shipping lane might cross the best wind farm site. A wind farm might impact an important fishery. A whale migration may affect a shipping lane.
- **Maximizing Economic Opportunities:** Over half of US residents live in coastal areas. Millions of jobs and billions of dollars worth of commercial and recreational activity depend on a healthy ocean and coasts. According to the National Oceans Economics Program, in 2004 the ocean-dependent economy, including six industries dominated by tourism and marine transportation, generated \$138 billion. Benefits like being able to go to a clean beach or storm protection provided by salt marshes that buffer the coast add value.

“Coastal and marine spatial planning removes the guesswork from placing new facilities—and working around existing ones—in US waters by taking a big-picture view of an ocean region and planning ahead for how we use the space.”

- Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish in an Olympian newspaper opinion piece

New Opportunities

- **Reducing Costs:** Ports need to dredge for ships to travel safely. At the same time, sediment is needed for habitat restoration projects. Instead of incurring costs to dispose of dredged material while paying for restoration material, coordinated planning could address both of these needs with a win-win solution.
- **Lowering Health Risks:** Harmful algal blooms are increasing in intensity and frequency. They can cause serious problems for human health, and can even lead to death for people suffering from asthma or other diseases. Improved cooperation can help the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's program for predicting and monitoring harmful algal blooms with state health departments to be able to warn people with asthma.

- **Finding New Cures:** Coral reefs, valued tourist attractions, are also a new frontier for pharmaceuticals such as next generation antibiotics derived using bacteria isolated from corals. We need to know where they are, what threats they face, and how to conserve them so we can continue to derive economic and health benefits.
- **Improving Security:** Expanded shipping in the Arctic will affect national security. We need to be able to locate new shipping lanes based on security, economic, and environmental issues.

Case Study: Massachusetts Oceans Act

In 2008, Massachusetts passed the Oceans Act to develop a comprehensive management plan for its state waters. In 2010, the state issued its final management plan. The plan allows for responsible development of renewable resources—wind in particular—and balances environmental protection with respect for the longstanding interests that share the state's coastal waters, from shipping to recreation.

CMSP is a part of a National Ocean Policy

President Obama issued an Executive Order creating the first National Ocean Policy. This is simply a common sense statement that we should protect the health of our ocean while supporting opportunities for sustainable and productive uses of ocean resources. It says we should use science in making decisions about our oceans and coast, and respect our cultural, recreational, and historical values related to the coasts, ocean, and Great Lakes. The Executive Order also fosters cooperation and coordination among agencies to make ocean programs more effective and efficient. CMSP is an essential part of achieving these goals. To learn more, visit www.oceanconservancy.org/cmstp.

“Bringing all the government agencies together on ocean policy is long overdue. Everyone wants to get it right.”

- Jim Lanard, president of the Offshore Wind Development Coalition in an interview with Recharge news

“A new national ocean policy, especially as it creates a unified framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning, is critical to the nation and to the ability of the Coast Guard to execute its mission.”

- Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant, US Coast Guard during testimony before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in 2009