

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Jan 13, 2017 at 8:27 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: sean kelly <sean_k20@ymail.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, Jan 12, 2017 at 7:53 PM, sean kelly <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Jan 12, 2017

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,

sean kelly
150 Bay 11th St
Brooklyn, NY 11228-3703
sean_k20@ymail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Jan 23, 2017 at 1:49 PM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Hope Kaufman <hope.a.kaufman@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 Sat, Jan 21, 2017 at 9:52 PM, Hope Kaufman <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Jan 21, 2017

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,

Hope Kaufman
42 Water St
Lebanon, NJ 08833-4527
hope.a.kaufman@gmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Jan 23, 2017 at 1:49 PM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Mae Ann Henderson <mah46385@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 Sat, Jan 21, 2017 at 9:22 PM, Mae Ann Henderson <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Jan 21, 2017

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.

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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,

Mae Ann Henderson
657 Surrey Wk. Dr.
Valparaiso, IN 46385
mah46385@gmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Thu, Feb 16, 2017 at 7:29 AM
Subject: Re: The Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: MarySu Schetter <music-song@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 Wed, Feb 15, 2017 at 7:26 PM, MarySu Schetter <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Feb 15, 2017

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. Offshore waters serve as migratory corridors and a home for ocean life, including endangered North Atlantic right whales, sea turtles, and many fish species.

Our ocean has been experiencing pollution, loss of habitat, and a chockful of industrial wrongdoings. It is critical the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan is a solid plan ensuring a healthy ocean today and always. I am hopeful that the RPB's first draft of the Ocean Action Plan is completed with success. Hopefully, the recommendations listed below will be implemented very soon.

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

Sincerely,

Miss MarySu Schetter
PO Box 1223
Voorhees, NJ 08043-7223
(856) 583-1535
music-song@comcast.net

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Feb 22, 2017 at 11:01 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Tamar Dick <pandorumation@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 Sun, Feb 19, 2017 at 2:03 AM, Tamar Dick <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Feb 19, 2017

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,

Ms. Tamar Dick
101 Race St
Catasauqua, PA 18032-3006
(610) 730-6757
pandorumation@gmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Feb 22, 2017 at 11:01 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Tamar Dick <pandorumation@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 Sun, Feb 19, 2017 at 2:21 AM, Tamar Dick <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Feb 19, 2017

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Dear Regional Planning Body,

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Sincerely,

Ms. Tamar Dick
101 Race St
Catasauqua, PA 18032-3006
(610) 730-6757
pandorumation@gmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Apr 7, 2017 at 2:50 PM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: William G Gonzalez <wgonzalezgarcia@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 Fri, Apr 7, 2017 at 2:26 PM, William G Gonzalez <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Apr 7, 2017

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,

Mr. William G Gonzalez
200 Dashew Dr Apt A15
Suffern, NY 10901-4289
(845) 300-3823
wgonzalezgarcia@yahoo.com

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

Date: Mon, Apr 17, 2017 at 7:40 AM

Subject: Fwd: Letter on Roseate Terns and Offshore Wind Energy Development

To: Michael Hutchins <MHutchins@abcbirds.org>, "robert.labelle@boem.gov" <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, "comment@neoceanplanning.org" <comment@neoceanplanning.org>, "Wendy Weber (wendi_weber@fws.gov)" <wendi_weber@fws.gov>, "Jerome Ford (Jerome_Ford@fws.gov)" <Jerome_Ford@fws.gov>, "martin_miller@fws.gov" <martin_miller@fws.gov>, "Pamela_Toschik@fws.gov" <Pamela_Toschik@fws.gov>, "Gary_Frazer@fws.gov" <Gary_Frazer@fws.gov>

Thank you for sharing the letter from the American Bird Conservancy and a coalition of conservation groups regarding offshore wind development and federally-endangered Roseate terns. We have shared it with the MidA RPB and with BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Programs; we will also post your letter 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.

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

From: **Michael Hutchins** <MHutchins@abcbirds.org>

Date: Fri, Apr 14, 2017 at 3:13 PM

Subject: Letter on Roseate Terns and Offshore Wind Energy Development

To: "robert.labelle@boem.gov" <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, "comment@neoceanplanning.org" <comment@neoceanplanning.org>, "Wendy Weber (wendi_weber@fws.gov)" <wendi_weber@fws.gov>, "Jerome Ford (Jerome_Ford@fws.gov)" <Jerome_Ford@fws.gov>, "martin_miller@fws.gov" <martin_miller@fws.gov>, "Pamela_Toschik@fws.gov" <Pamela_Toschik@fws.gov>, "Gary_Frazer@fws.gov" <Gary_Frazer@fws.gov>

Please see a letter below from the American bird Conservancy and a coalition of conservation groups regarding offshore wind development and federally-endangered Roseate terns. Thank you for your consideration.

Link: <https://abcbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/roseate-tern-offshore-wind.pdf>

Michael Hutchins, Ph.D.

Director, Bird Smart Wind Energy Campaign

American Bird Conservancy

4301 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 451. Washington, DC. 20008

(202) 888-7485 (O-Phone, Text and Fax); (301) 367-5053 (M)

mhutchins@abcbirds.org

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Apr 21, 2017 at 2:24 PM
Subject: Re: Fw: re Ocean Frontiers III
To: Sherri Lange <kodaisl@rogers.com>

Thank you for sharing your message about the Ocean Frontiers film. We have shared it with the MidA RPB and will also 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.

On Fri, Apr 21, 2017 at 10:58 AM, Sherri Lange <kodaisl@rogers.com> wrote:
Friends,

Please find below our comments regarding Ocean Frontiers.

Kind regards,

Sherri Lange

*Sherri Lange
CEO, NA-PAW, North American Platform Against Wind Power*

416-567-5115
kodaisl@rogers.com
www.na-paw.org

Please note that messages to these lists are intended for the private members and invitees only. If the material is informational, please feel free to circulate. If posting, please consider copyright laws. Please note that not all the views contained in circulation of news are those of NA-PAW. If you have received this in error, please respond to the writer and delete the message.

Thank you!



----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Sherri Lange <kodaisl@rogers.com>

To: "films@greenfireproductions.org" <films@greenfireproductions.org>

Sent: Friday, April 21, 2017 10:56 AM

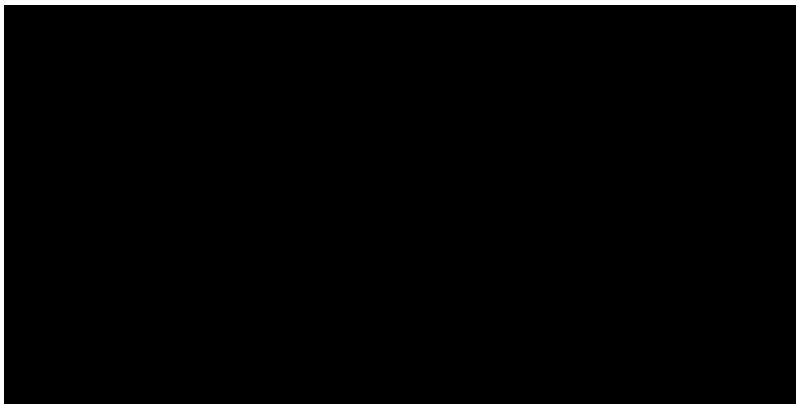
Subject: re Ocean Frontiers III

Dear Eva

We were alerted to your screening of Ocean Frontiers, and would like to add our comments.

We are deeply committed to the same principles of sustainability and conservation as your filmmakers. However, industrial wind provides zero net public good, and continues to damage the environment exponentially, and serially, with every single monster turbine erected.

They are not green, free, and clean. They are manufactured using fossil fuels, transported thousands of miles with fossil fuels. They only last about 10-15 years before major faults, and repairs are required, or complete shutdown. The industry tells you, 20-25 years, which also in the grand scheme of things, is pathetically short sighted. I would guess for us, this is merciful, because the clean up can shortly begin. Carbon fibre blades cannot be recycled, and we are accruing mountains of industrial junk at this time. There are highly toxic rare earth elements in the magnets, which also are not retrieved on the end of life event for the turbines. [See Poison Wind, a short movie](#) on this, and you will never look at a turbine the same way again.



Poison Wind

Poison wind power – the shocking environmental damage they don't want you to see.

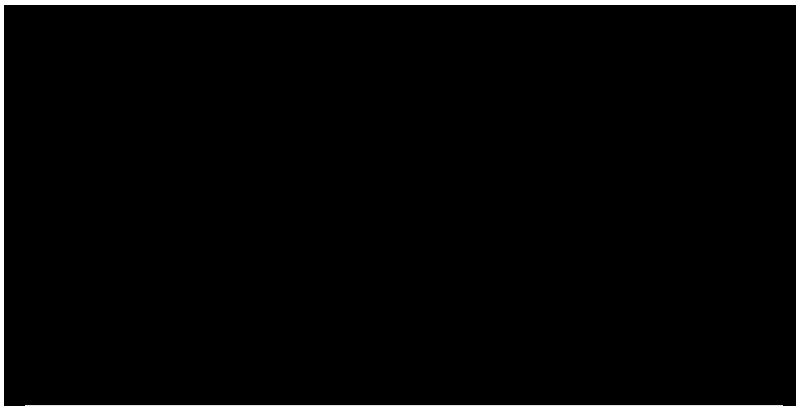
The worst sin of this series of lies is that turbines produce net zero electricity world wide. Net zero in 2014, point two of one percent. This despite ridiculous billions and trillions of subsidies, mostly directly into the pockets of developers: no schools, no

hospitals, *no benefit at all to society or the environment. They add to a so called carbon footprint, do nothing at all to mitigate other harms.*

Please edit your film, to portray a vision of ocean preservation that does not include this contamination and blight. Please also edit out any developer friendly materials, or promotions for offshore wind.

Turbines are nothing but a cash grab, and again produce little or *zero power.*

[Buffet told an audience in Omaha, Nebraska recently.](#) *"For example, on wind energy, we get a tax credit if we build a lot of wind farms. That's the only reason to build them. They don't make sense without the tax credit."*



Big Wind's Bogus Subsidies

Giving tax credits to the wind energy industry is a waste of time and money.

But while the wind production tax credit may be great for Buffet's bottom line, it's harmful for American taxpayers and energy consumers.

Kind regards,

Sherri Lange

“[Gearboxes](#) have been failing in [wind turbines](#) since the early 1990s. Barely a turbine make has escaped. The problem reached epidemic proportions with a massive series failure of gearboxes in [NEG Micon](#) machines. At the time, the NEG Micon brand was the most sold wind turbine in the world. The disaster brought the company to its knees ; It was taken over by [Vestas](#), the world’s largest [wind turbine manufacturer](#), which still is challenged by gearbox and rotor failures.

As [previously noted](#), a large number of gearboxes have had to be replaced “in large numbers.” Der Spiegel reports that the German Insurance Association is none too happy...

“In addition to generators and gearboxes, rotor blades also often display defects,” a report on the technical shortcomings of wind turbines claims. The insurance companies are complaining of problems ranging from those caused by improper storage to dangerous cracks and fractures... The frail turbines coming off the assembly lines at some manufacturers threaten to damage an industry that for years has been hailed as a wild success.

At [Spiegel Online](#), Simone Kaiser and Michael relay a concern about installed wind turbines:

After the industry’s recent boom years, wind power providers and experts are now concerned. The facilities may not be as reliable and durable as producers claim. Indeed, with thousands of mishaps, breakdowns and accidents having been reported in recent years, the difficulties seem to be mounting. Gearboxes hiding inside the casings perched on top of the towering masts have short shelf lives, often crapping out before even five years is up. In some cases, fractures form along the rotors, or even in the foundation, after only limited operation. Short circuits or overheated propellers have been known to cause fires. All this despite manufacturers’ promises that the turbines would last at least 20 years.

Turbines contain up to 1000 gallons of oil and lubricants, which need to be replaced.

Sherri Lange

CEO, NA-PAW, North American Platform Against Wind Power

416-567-5115

kodaisl@rogers.com

www.na-paw.org

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Thank you!



From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, May 26, 2017 at 1:08 PM
Subject: Re: Updated: recommendations for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body re: the June 20th Meeting
To: "Chase, Alison" <achase@nrdc.org>
Cc: "McKay, Laura (DEQ)" <Laura.McKay@deq.virginia.gov>, "lisa.croft@noaa.gov" <lisa.croft@noaa.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thank you for the letter on behalf of several organizations regarding recommendations for the June 20 MidA RPB meeting. We appreciate your suggestions and look forward to your attendance at the MidA RPB meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland.

We will share your letter with 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, May 26, 2017 at 12:57 PM, Chase, Alison <achase@nrdc.org> wrote:
Attached please find the final version of this letter. An additional organization wished to sign on so I have updated the list of signers accordingly. Please note that the rest of the letter is identical to the one previously sent over.

Please contact me at 212.727.4551 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Ali Chase

From: Chase, Alison
Sent: Friday, May 26, 2017 12:05 PM
To: McKay, Laura (DEQ); 'lisa.croft@noaa.gov'; 'KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org'; 'MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov'
Cc: Chase, Alison
Subject: Recommendations for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body re: the June 20th Meeting

Attached please find a letter from several organizations regarding the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body's upcoming June meeting. 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
Please save paper.

Think before printing.

**American Littoral Society • Maryland Academy of Sciences at The Maryland Science Center •
National Aquarium • Natural Resources Defense Council • Surfrider Foundation •
Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center • Wildlife Conservation Society • Wild Oceans**

May 26, 2016

Ms. Lisa Croft
Fisheries Policy Analyst
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Ms. Laura McKay
Program Manager
Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
629 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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

Submitted electronically via MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov

Re: Recommendations for the June 20th Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body meeting

Dear Ms. Croft, Ms. Leonard, and Ms. McKay,

On behalf of our organizations and their millions of members and activists, we congratulate you and the other Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB or RPB) members on your efforts thus far to implement the *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* (Plan). As you well know, ports, shipping companies, offshore wind developers, conservationists, fishermen and others supported the development of this region's first-ever action plan to keep the waters off our shores healthy and help drive and sustain our coastal economy for the long haul. We appreciate and stand with you in your commitment to ensure that this sensible guide for better ocean health and smart development advances as quickly as possible.

We are looking forward the RPB's June 20th meeting and hope this event includes review and public comment on a draft Plan performance monitoring and evaluation plan (PME plan). Beyond the requirements noted in the Plan itself,¹ we urge you to consider the following elements in a PME plan draft:

¹ As stated in the Plan at 101, "... the RPB will develop a [PME plan] to provide the RPB, stakeholders, and the public with the tools to determine whether and how effectively the planning actions implemented by the RPB are achieving the specific objectives they are intended to advance. Key components of this PME plan will be the Framework goals and objectives, interjurisdictional coordination actions presented in this Plan, and a series of indicators, to be

- *Success stories.* The best way to encourage continued momentum on Plan actions is to document how the Plan and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal are being used to improve ocean health and decision-making. Success stories from both the agencies and the stakeholder community could be captured as part of the PME plan to help convey the RPB's progress.
- *Online presence.* Posting and updating each indicator's timeline, work plan, and lead agencies online would allow stakeholders and the public to follow Plan implementation throughout the year, in between the annual RPB meetings and individual workshops. Next steps, information gaps, and needs could also be shared to help stakeholders know how best to engage.
- *Measures of public engagement and satisfaction.* As our organizations have previously stated,² the PME plan should incorporate measures to evaluate public involvement and satisfaction as a component of a successful ocean plan.³ Similarly, as we learn from Plan implementation and as new issues, data, and ocean uses arise, having a specific online mechanism for stakeholders to formally request that the RPB address a management issue would enhance Plan performance and engagement. A general framework could include: 1) a stakeholder submitting a formal comment to the RPB; 2) RPB Co-Leads deciding whether or not to take up the issue; and, 3) if the issue is prioritized for discussion, an RPB forum is held to discuss improvements to the Plan with federal agencies, states, tribes, and stakeholders.

We also recommend the RPB outline the beginnings of an early stakeholder notification approach at the June meeting. Local knowledge is an important source of expertise, and articulating a clear, early stakeholder notification approach would help result in improved information early in the review process when feedback is most valuable, and when developers have more flexibility. Fleshing out what is envisioned by the RPB for increased stakeholder engagement would greatly help interested parties know when and how best to engage.⁴

We appreciate that the June 20th meeting will include the opportunity for "topic table" discussions and suggest a focus on the Healthy Ocean Ecosystem actions, such as the efforts to identify ecologically rich areas, map shifts in ocean species and habitats, and develop a Mid-Atlantic Ocean Acidification Network, as these have been the subject of recent workshops and webinars. Table discussions could address a few key questions coming out of these meetings.

developed ... that will be used to measure the effectiveness of specific actions." Additional details are at Appendix 6, available at <https://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Action-Plan/>.

² Please see the letter sent to the RPB dated September 2, 2016, "Re: Recommendations on the draft *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan*."

³ This idea is supported in the Plan's Appendix 6: "Indicators that measure and evaluate Plan progress by focusing on actions related to addressing institutional coordination, *stakeholder engagement and satisfaction*, and the achievement of implementation Plan milestones may provide managers, stakeholders, and the public with more useful information by which to assess progress." Emphasis added.

⁴ See, for example, the Plan at 35: "Project proponents should seek to identify, engage, and incorporate information from stakeholders before filing a permit application or otherwise formally initiating the environmental review and permitting process, to ensure that stakeholder information helps inform both the project application and subsequent public, stakeholder, and agency review."

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts for the upcoming RPB meeting with you. We appreciate all of the time and effort that you have invested in this Plan, and look forward to continuing to work with you and your agencies to flesh out this valuable tool in a manner that benefits our region's ocean and its users.

Sincerely,

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

Pam Lyons Gromen
Executive Director
Wild Oceans

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society

John Racanelli
CEO
National Aquarium

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

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

Van R. Reiner
President and CEO
Maryland Academy of Sciences at
The Maryland Science Center

W. Mark Swingle
Director of Research & Conservation
Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Tue, Jun 6, 2017 at 11:15 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Marissa Goldsmith <marissa@marissagoldsmith.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean action plan specifically the comment period closed on September 6, 2016, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Tue, Jun 6, 2017 at 10:35 AM, Marissa Goldsmith <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Jun 6, 2017

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,

Mr. Marissa Goldsmith
8211 Smithfield Ave
Springfield, VA 22152-3054
(703) 555-5555
marissa@marissagoldsmith.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 9, 2017 at 8:33 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: ashrostedopp@gmail.com

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean action plan specifically, the comment period closed on September 6, 2016, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Fri, Jun 9, 2017 at 8:11 AM, Ashley Dopp <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Jun 9, 2017

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.

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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.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Ashley Dopp
565 Lyman Ave
Woodbridge, NJ 07095-2332
(732) 425-9345
ashrostedopp@gmail.com

From: **Robert Sanchez** <petitions-noreply@moveon.org>
Date: Sat, Jun 10, 2017 at 8:01 PM
Subject: I'm the 183rd signer: "Help Protect the Atlantic Ocean"
To: Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body,

I just signed a petition addressed to you titled [Help Protect the Atlantic Ocean](#). So far, 183 people have signed the petition.

You can reach me directly by replying to this email. **Or, post a response for MoveOn.org to pass along to all petition signers by clicking here:** http://petitions.moveon.org/target_talkback.html?tt=tt-112459-custom-73232-20270610-0006zw

The petition states:

"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. We hope the Regional Planning Body solicits public input, sets a clear deadline, and outlines clearly which agencies are responsible for putting the plan into practice."

My additional comments are:

Switch to a utility with a solar or wind option and buy an electric car if you can. Will address issues like this. Air pollution lands up in the oceans. pluginamerica.org and electrek.co.

To download a PDF file of all of your constituents who have signed the petition, including their addresses, click this

link: http://petitions.moveon.org/deliver_pdf.html?job_id=2072738&target_type=custom&target_id=73232

To download a CSV file of all of your constituents who have signed the petition, including their addresses, click this

link: http://petitions.moveon.org/deliver_pdf.html?job_id=2072738&target_type=custom&target_id=73232&csv=1

Robert Sanchez
Houston, TX

This email was sent through MoveOn's public petition website, a free service that allows anyone to set up their own online petition and share it with friends. MoveOn does not endorse the contents of petitions posted on our public petition website. If you have any questions, please email petitions@moveon.org. If you don't want to receive further emails updating you on how many people have signed this petition, click here: http://petitions.moveon.org/delivery_unsub.html?e=ld5Xl5sGoeqmBUZeGMaqUE1pZEF0bGFudGljUIBCQGJvZW0uZ292&petition_id=112459.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 16, 2017 at 1:24 PM
Subject: Re: Recommendations for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body from the May 19 ERA Workshop
To: "Chase, Alison" <achase@nrdc.org>
Cc: "McKay, Laura (DEQ)" <Laura.McKay@deq.virginia.gov>, "lisa.croft@noaa.gov" <lisa.croft@noaa.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thank you for the letter on behalf of several organizations regarding your thoughts from the ERA workshop on May 19. We appreciate your feedback and suggestions, and we look forward to your participation during the MidA RPB meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland on June 20.

We will share your letter with 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, Jun 16, 2017 at 9:56 AM, Chase, Alison <achase@nrdc.org> wrote:

Attached please find a letter from several organizations regarding the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body's recent Ecologically Rich Areas Workshop. 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

Please save paper.

Think before printing.

**American Littoral Society • National Aquarium • Natural Resources Defense Council •
Surfrider Foundation • Wildlife Conservation Society**

June 16, 2017

Ms. Lisa Croft
Fisheries Policy Analyst
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Ms. Laura McKay
Program Manager
Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
629 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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

Submitted electronically via MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov

Re: Recommendations from the May 19th Ecologically Rich Areas Workshop

Dear Ms. Croft, Ms. Leonard, and Ms. McKay,

Thank you and the other Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB or RPB) members for hosting the May 19th Ecologically Rich Areas (ERA) Workshop. We are enthusiastic about the latest data synthesis products from the Marine Life Data Analysis Team and appreciated the opportunity to share our thoughts on the RPB's next steps to identify and increase understanding of ERAs.

We were concerned, however, to hear questions by some in attendance at the Workshop as to the nature and value of the ERA work. Promoting a common RPB message on this effort's value and progress is essential to its success and we strongly support the RPB's *2017 Draft Annual Work Plan and Progress Report* (Work Plan) call for additional ERA stakeholder workshops and RPB materials like a fact sheet with FAQs which clearly defines what an ERA is, what has been accomplished, and steps for public engagement.¹

In the simplest terms, ERAs are special ocean places where we find high diversity and abundance of wildlife and the habitats they depend on. Different places may be special for different reasons; the Mid-Atlantic RPB has set five components of ecological importance: areas of high productivity; areas of high biodiversity; areas of high species abundance; areas of vulnerable marine resources; and areas of rare

¹ The *2017 Draft Annual Work Plan and Progress Report* is available at <https://www.boem.gov/Draft-2017-Annual-Work-Plan-and-Progress-Report/>.

marine resources.² These categories are based on extensive dialogue with this region and the Northeast's science community,³ public comment on the *Draft Framework for Identification of Ecologically Rich Areas*, and a series of stakeholder workshops. The RPB's further clarification that there are four types of ERAs – fixed, clustered, ambulatory, and ephemeral – based on feedback is wise and serves to pinpoint these areas in time.⁴

We are pleased to see that the RPB's Work Plan calls for draft ERA component layers by mid-October and welcome workshops to further refine these layers and begin discussions of a composite/ summary ERA map in November.⁵ This summary map of ERAs (synthesizing all five components) should reflect the region's critical places. We urge you to prioritize the ERA work as an RPB and within your agencies to allow for: 1.) posting of final ERA data layers on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal (Portal) by the end of 2017; 2.) posting of a final ERA summary map on the Portal in early 2018; and, 3.) updates to these maps alongside any base layer updates to ensure the products represent our most up-to-date understanding of the marine system.

Having the academic community collaborate on scientifically accurate, peer-reviewed ERA data layers and then develop an ERA summary map, together with other stakeholders and states, tribes and the federal government, adds a crucial capstone to the marine life data work. Once complete and posted on the Portal, these valuable new data tools of ERA layers and the summary map will help managers, businesses, and other stakeholders make better development decisions by giving everyone the same ecological snapshots to base discussions from. If more information is required to determine why an area pops or does not, the thousands of various marine life base layers are available on the Portal for review. This enterprise can be viewed in much the same way as the Human Use Data Synthesis (HUDS) effort that generated a series of new map layers on human use.

We want to reiterate that taking steps to conserve the functioning of ERAs does not mean closing them off to human use. Activities may occur as long as the area's ecological value is conserved. Such an approach acknowledges the interdependency of a healthy ocean and regional coastal communities and economies which depend on its well-being.

We like the idea of selecting pilot ERAs to explore the challenges facing an area's health and what can be done to help keep it healthy far into the future. We recommend selecting at least two initial pilot areas – one that best represents an area of regional importance, for example, the Mid-Atlantic's continental shelf might be an option, and a second area that is experiencing significant stresses and where management efforts could help sustain the area's natural balance. While the in-depth reports generated about these selected areas would not, by the very nature of the RPB, require any agency actions, they could help inform agency decisions.

² *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan's Appendix 4, Draft Framework for Identification of Ecologically Rich Areas*, available at <https://www.boem.gov/Ocean-Action-Plan/>.

³ Information on the Northeast Regional Planning Body's Ecosystem-Based Management Work Group available at <http://neoceanplanning.org/about/northeast-rpb/>.

⁴ Work Plan available at <https://www.boem.gov/MidA-RPB-Public-Meeting-June-2017/>.

⁵ Work Plan available at <https://www.boem.gov/MidA-RPB-Public-Meeting-June-2017/>.

While we firmly believe that pilots should be picked after the full suite of ERA component layers is mapped, we do not think that it is necessary to wait on advancing a pilot until the ERA summary map is created. Certain areas will no doubt be determined as ecologically important in a few categories and we recommend choosing initial pilot locations that are identified as important in several ERA data layers by January, 2018.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts from the recent ERA Workshop with you and for your inclusive and transparent approach to the ERA work. We look forward to continuing to work with the RPB to identify ERAs and help ensure the long-term health of our ocean life.

Sincerely,

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society

Kris Hoellen
Senior Vice President/Chief Conservation Officer
National Aquarium

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

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Jul 3, 2017 at 7:34 AM
Subject: Re: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Anne Fisher <fishopper@verizon.net>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean action plan specifically, the comment period closed on September 6, 2016, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

On Sat, Jul 1, 2017 at 3:20 PM, Anne Fisher <feedback@lcv.org> wrote:

Jul 1, 2017

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.

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- 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,

Ms. Anne Fisher
2219 Algonquin Dr
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076-4605
(908) 233-2219
fishopper@verizon.net

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Jul 17, 2017 at 7:44 AM
Subject: Fwd: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Tamar Dick <pandorumation@gmail.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean action plan specifically, the comment period closed on September 6, 2016, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

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

From: **Tamar Dick** <feedback@lcv.org>
Date: Mon, Jul 17, 2017 at 4:30 AM
Subject: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Jul 17, 2017

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,

Ms. Tamar Dick
101 Race St Apt 219
Catasauqua, PA 18032-1985
(610) 730-6757
pandorumation@gmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Jul 17, 2017 at 7:45 AM
Subject: Fwd: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Tamar Dick <pandorumation@gmail.com>

Thank you, the MidA RPB welcomes comments at any time. However, for the draft ocean action plan specifically, the comment period closed on September 6, 2016, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation.

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

From: **Tamar Dick** <feedback@lcv.org>
Date: Mon, Jul 17, 2017 at 4:36 AM
Subject: My comments on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
To: Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Jul 17, 2017

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,

Ms. Tamar Dick
101 Race St Apt 219
Catasauqua, PA 18032-1985
(610) 730-6757
pandorumation@gmail.com

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Thu, Aug 17, 2017 at 8:55 AM
Subject: Re: No Drilling in NC
To: "Elena Mozur (Rep: JN - 8722)" <EMozur@giftcraft.com>
Cc: BOEM Public Affairs <boempublicaffairs@boem.gov>

Thank you for the message. To comment on the Request for Interest regarding the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, please visit: www.regulations.gov and search for docket "BOEM-2017-0050". Please note that the public comment period for the RFI ends on August 17, 2017.

On Thu, Aug 17, 2017 at 8:03 AM, Elena Mozur (Rep: JN - 8722) <EMozur@giftcraft.com> wrote:
Hello,

I live in North Carolina and strongly disagree with any plans to drill off of our coast. Please do not put our beaches and coastal ecosystems at risk! NO DRILLING IN NC!!! Thank you.

Elena Mozur
Territory Sales Representative
Giftcraft
336-740-0442
www.giftcraft.com

Please check out **Yo Sox!** on:

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Aug 28, 2017 at 11:41 AM
Subject: Re: Comments on Mid-Atlantic Recreation Workshops
To: Matt Gove <mgove@surfrider.org>
Cc: "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, "Hassell, Kevin" <Kevin.Hassell@dep.nj.gov>, "Semple, Elizabeth" <elizabeth.semples@dep.nj.gov>, "Simpson, Douglas C CDR" <douglas.c.simpson@uscg.mil>

Thank you for the letter on behalf of several organizations regarding your thoughts on the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Non-Consumptive Recreation Workshops. We appreciate your suggestions, and will share them with the members of the MidA RPB for consideration as the fall workshops are being planned. We will also post your letter to the written public comments section on the MidA RPB webpage.

We look forward to your participation during the Mid-Atlantic Non-Consumptive Recreation Workshops this fall. Please continue to contact us with any additional comments you may have.

On Fri, Aug 25, 2017 at 2:49 PM, Matt Gove <mgove@surfrider.org> wrote:
Letter attached. Please let me know if you have any questions, thanks!

Matt Gove

--

Matt Gove | Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager | [Surfrider Foundation](http://SurfriderFoundation.org)
952.250.4545 | mgove@surfrider.org
fb: @midatlanticsurfrider | tw: @masurfrider | ig: @surfridermidatlantic

Surfrider Foundation • Natural Resources Defense Council • Virginia Aquarium & Marine
Science Center • Wildlife Conservation Society • American Littoral Society

August 25, 2017

Mr. Douglas Simpson
Marine Information Specialist
Waterways Management Branch 5th District, U.S. Coast Guard
Department of Homeland Security

Ms. Elizabeth Semple
Manager
Office of Coastal and Land Use Planning
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Submitted electronically via MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov

RE: Upcoming Mid-Atlantic Non-Consumptive Recreation Workshops

Dear Mr. Simpson and Ms. Semple,

Thank you and the other Non-Consumptive Recreation Work Group members for your initial steps to implement the actions in the Non-Consumptive Recreation section of the *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* (the Plan). As you know, the social and economic impact from non-consumptive recreation is extremely important to coastal communities. Learning more about any conflicts with, or detriments to, non-consumptive recreation, and possible ways to mitigate such issues, will benefit coastal and ocean management in the Mid-Atlantic.

We look forward to attending the Mid-Atlantic's upcoming non-consumptive recreation workshops, and wanted to share our thoughts on the goals and set-up for these meetings. The recommendations below build off of comments many of our organizations provided to the recent Non-Consumptive Recreation Survey produced by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) and Rutgers University.

We believe the Work Group should establish a few clear goals for the workshops and that these goals should track the Plan's identified actions. First, we have an opportunity to ask the public for their thoughts on how to identify valuable non-consumptive recreation areas. Discussion topics could include: factors (economic, social, environmental) for deciding importance, logistics for mapping such areas, and what body would be a best fit for highlighting that importance, be it local or state government, chambers of commerce, or tourism board. The information gathered

should help the RPB achieve Non-consumptive Recreation Action 1, Section A of the Plan:

“A. Define, in collaboration with stakeholders, what it would mean for ocean and coastal uses and areas to be considered important for non-consumptive recreation. A variety of factors may be considered (e.g., intensity of use, contributions to local economies, maintaining dark skies and natural sounds). Complete identification and mapping of such areas and put them on the Data Portal. (**short-term and ongoing**)”¹

These meetings also offer the chance to gather information from the public and stakeholders about: (1) Conflicts between non-consumptive recreational uses; (2) Conflicts between non-consumptive recreational uses and other coastal and ocean uses; (3) Conflicts between non-consumptive recreational uses and marine and coastal wildlife; and, (4) Factors that diminish enjoyment of non-consumptive recreational use like reduced public access, poorly planned beach fill projects, or poor water quality.

The information gathered should help the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) work towards completing Non-consumptive Recreation Action 1, Sections B and C:

“B. Identify and assess potential impacts and use conflicts to important non-consumptive recreational uses from other human uses, as well as potential impacts and conflicts between non-consumptive recreational uses and marine and coastal resources. (**short-term and ongoing**)

C. Work with [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service] to develop and disseminate guidance for recreational users on best practices that reduce potential impacts between recreational activities and marine and coastal wildlife. (**short-term and ongoing**)”²

We encourage you to host these workshops during weekday evenings to maximize stakeholder and public involvement. Please also send notification of the workshops’ aim and timing as early as possible. Having clearly stated goals in the workshop announcements will draw more attendance and reduce any confusion among attendees.

Attendance by RPB members and representatives from other relevant federal agencies is also critical. Having delegates from states and federal agencies at the workshops will further the conversation and signal buy-in from the agencies to workshop attendees. It is important to have representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish

¹ Plan at 70, available at <https://www.boem.gov/Ocean-Action-Plan/>.

² Plan at 70-71, available at <https://www.boem.gov/Ocean-Action-Plan/>.

and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management in attendance as these agencies' actions often impact recreational uses.

We thank you for considering our requests and look forward to the workshops this fall. Please feel free to reach out to any of us with further questions.

Sincerely,

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

W. Mark Swingle
Director of Research & Conservation
Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

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

Helen Henderson
Ocean Program Manager
American Littoral Society

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Tue, Oct 3, 2017 at 1:21 PM
Subject: Re: Resolution in Support
To: Danielle Lavalle <dlavalle@longbeachtownship.com>

Thank you for sending the Resolution that was adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Long Beach, New Jersey, on October 2, 2017.

We appreciate the Resolution supporting the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan, and we will share the Resolution with the members of the MidA RPB as we continue our efforts. We will also post the Resolution to the written public comments section on the MidA RPB webpage.

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

On Tue, Oct 3, 2017 at 11:21 AM, Danielle Lavalle <dlavalle@longbeachtownship.com> wrote:
Attached please find a Resolution that was adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Long Beach on Monday, October 2, 2017. This Resolution is in support of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.

Thank you.

Danielle La Valle
Twp. of Long Beach
Municipal Clerk's Office
609-361-6691

Resolution 17-1002.02

**Resolution of the Township of Long Beach, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey,
Supporting the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan**

WHEREAS, healthy ocean eco-systems and sustainable ocean uses are a benefit to quality of life for residents of New Jersey by ensuring the ocean's environmental and economic attributes continue to provide for future generations; and

WHEREAS, Long Beach Township strives to support actions which protect tourism, assure clean and healthy water, and improve the working and living environments of the ocean as steps to building a collaborative and respectful ocean user community that will thrive well into the new century; and

WHEREAS, Long Beach Township hereby acknowledges that our residents desire a healthy, thriving, and sustainable future for themselves, future generations, and our ocean; and

WHEREAS, Long Beach Township wishes to support a Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP) which benefits our residents and our ocean now and far into the future by exploring and adopting collaborative and coordinated federal, state and local government practices; and

WHEREAS, by supporting the implementation of a strong Mid-Atlantic Regional OAP Long Beach Township is enabling the process to allow community members and additional stakeholders the opportunity to engage further and have their voices heard regarding planning for sustainable uses and healthy ocean ecosystem practices; and

WHEREAS, as elected representatives of Long Beach Township, we have a significant responsibility to provide leadership which will seek to protect our coastal economy and healthy ocean ecosystems to strengthen our New Jersey coast and ocean; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Long Beach wishes to support the Mid-Atlantic Regional OAP on matters of a healthy ocean ecosystem and sustainable uses, the Township Commissioners wish to pursue public and private actions that will lead to the continuation of a strong, protective plan.

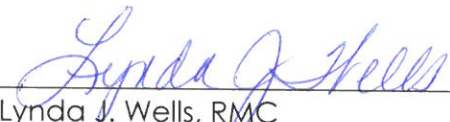
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Commissioners request that Congressman Thomas MacArthur extend the Township's support on all federal and/or state issues involving the planning process on behalf of Long Beach Township.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by Township Commissioners of the Township of Long Beach that we do hereby send notice to Congressman Thomas MacArthur, and copy to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, State of NJ RPB member NJDEP to acknowledge Long Beach Township's support for the continuation of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan and process.

PASSED ON: October 2, 2017

CERTIFICATION

I, **LYNDA J. WELLS**, Municipal Clerk for the Township of Long Beach do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution 17-1002.02 was duly adopted by the Board of Commissioners at a regular meeting held Monday, October 2, 2017.


Lynda J. Wells, RMC
Municipal Clerk

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Thu, Oct 5, 2017 at 3:23 PM
Subject: Re: NJ Municipal Resolutions in support of Ocean Planning
To: Helen Henderson <Helen@littoralsociety.org>

Thank you for your message on behalf of the American Littoral Society, and for sharing the news about the resolutions from three New Jersey coastal municipalities in support of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.

We also appreciate you passing along the American Littoral Society press statement and blog post. We will share all of this information with the members of the MidA RPB as we continue our efforts. We will also post this information 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, Oct 5, 2017 at 2:51 PM, Helen Henderson <Helen@littoralsociety.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

We greatly appreciate your efforts on regional ocean planning, and on behalf of the American Littoral Society I wanted to share some exciting news with you.

Last week, three NJ coastal municipalities became the first ever municipal governments to pass resolutions in support of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan!

For your convenience, I have attached the resolutions to this communication (along with our press statement) but I hope you will please take a moment when you have time to read our blog post [here](#).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind Regards,

Helen Henderson

~~~~~  
Helen Henderson  
Ocean Program Manager  
American Littoral Society  
Cell: 732.546.2514  
[www.littoralsociety.org](http://www.littoralsociety.org)  
*Empowering People to Care for the Coast*  
Join us on [Facebook](#)

# Littoral Society Applauds Leadership of New Jersey Coastal Communities

10/3/2017

0 COMMENTS



Every community along the New Jersey coast and throughout the state has a unique individuality. Yet one thing is connecting and certain: each and every one is somehow tied to the sea. With over 130 miles of shore from Sandy Hook to Cape May, it doesn't take much to find the ocean connection between communities.

Last week, three New Jersey coastal municipalities proudly expressed their connection to the ocean by becoming the **first U.S.** municipal governments to strongly support the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP). The Mid-Atlantic OAP creates a more informed and coordinated approach to how we manage our ocean's resources; ocean planning ensures we make smart decisions about future uses.

Berkeley Township (Ocean County), the Borough of Bradley Beach (Monmouth County), and the City of Asbury Park (Monmouth County) **each adopted resolutions** supporting a "strong, protective" Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.

These resolutions recognize the benefits that ocean planning brings to New Jersey, which include:

- Protecting tourism and our blue economy;
- Ensuring a healthy ocean ecosystem;
- Working for clean and healthy waters;
- Improving working and living environments;
- Providing sustainability for future generations.

With ocean planning, all communities have a voice. Just as municipalities plan for how to use their land, regional ocean planning helps New Jersey, our fellow Mid-Atlantic States, tribal nations, and federal agencies to do the same across our shared waters.

Such coordination is critically important given the overlapping and sometimes conflicting responsibilities between dozens of federal, state, and tribal agencies for addressing ocean development and conservation. However, ocean planning also helps elevate the voices of beach goers, recreational fishing communities, municipalities, business, and conservation interests, so they are heard along side those speaking for such things as national security, major corporate interests, and the commercial fishing and shipping industries.

Ocean planning uses the best science available to coordinate a wide variety of governmental decisions — from identifying ecologically rich areas to ensuring uses, like sand mining and wind energy, are sustainable. The planning process also addresses how to improve important issues for our communities, such as marine debris plastic pollution.

At the American Littoral Society, conserving the ocean and coast from harm is part of our fundamental mission. We believe that the best way to fulfill that mission, in light of the increasing demands, is with careful, coordinated ocean planning.

***The Society applauds the call for the continuation of a strong, protective ocean plan by our municipal ocean partners and congratulate them for their leadership in the state of New Jersey and the entire Mid-Atlantic region.***



0 Comments



# PRESS RELEASE

October 4, 2017

Contact: Helen Henderson

732-546-2514

[Helen@littoralsociety.org](mailto:Helen@littoralsociety.org)

## New Jersey Municipalities Take Lead on Protecting Ocean Environment and Blue Economy

The American Littoral Society thanks Berkeley Township (Ocean County), the Borough of Bradley Beach (Monmouth County), and the City of Asbury Park (Monmouth County) for [showing leadership](#) in support of ocean planning.

These three coastal municipalities are the *first* to support the [Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan](#), the region's blueprint for ensuring a healthy Mid-Atlantic ocean ecosystem and sustainable ocean uses. Each adopted a [resolution](#) that strongly supports the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan and recognizes the many benefits ocean planning brings to New Jersey.

"Berkeley Township is proud to be the first Ocean County municipality to support the Ocean Action Plan," said Mayor Carmen Amato. "We have always supported the American Littoral Society and their efforts have helped to protect and improve our bay, ocean and many other natural resources. I hope that every municipality in Ocean County, as well as in the state, will follow suit and support this Ocean Action Plan to ensure that New Jersey's greatest natural amenity is protected and improved for generations to come."

The town council of Bradley Beach, a coastal community near Asbury Park, NJ, echoed those sentiments.

"Bradley Beach is committed to supporting this Plan, which will benefit our residents and our ocean," said John Weber, Bradley Beach Councilman.

In New Jersey, concern for the ocean isn't simply about the view, noted Asbury Park Deputy Mayor Amy Quinn.

"As a coastal city, we recognize that our health is directly tied to the health of our ocean and coast," Quinn said. "Supporting the Ocean Action Plan helps ensure the long-term health of not only our beaches, but also our residents, and our tourism economy."

Asbury Park Mayor John Moor added: "We have a significant responsibility to provide leadership that will protect our coastal economy and a healthy ocean. Supporting the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan enables us to do exactly that."

Just as municipalities plan for how to use their land, regional ocean planning helps New Jersey, the Mid-Atlantic States, tribal nations, and federal agencies to do the same across their shared waters.

"Support by these municipalities sends a message that coastal communities are paying attention and understand how planning for future use of the ocean advances all of our

interests," said Helen Henderson, Ocean Planning Manager for the American Littoral Society.

Ocean planning helps give all stakeholders - including beach goers, recreational and commercial fishing communities, local governments, business and conservation interests, and those tasked with protecting US security - a voice on balancing the increasing demands for ocean resources. Among the mounting challenges are renewed calls for offshore drilling, new wind energy projects and increasing shipping traffic.

Ocean planning uses coordinated data collection and analysis to guide decisions, such as how to ensure that habitats critical for sea life are not harmed by sand mining or wind energy development projects. The planning process also addresses other important issues for coastal communities, such as marine plastic pollution.

***The Society applauds these actions by our municipal ocean partners and we congratulate them for their leadership in the state of New Jersey and the entire Mid-Atlantic region by calling for the continuation of a strong, protective ocean plan. We look forward to working with them to ensure a healthy New Jersey coast and ocean.***

[Visit the Littoral Society ocean planning page to learn more](#) about ocean planning, the Ocean Action Plan, and the Society's work.

###

*The American Littoral Society is a member-supported, coastal conservation non-profit that promotes the study and conservation of marine life and habitat, protects the coast from harm and engages communities to do the same through work in education, advocacy, and conservation. Founded in 1961, the American Littoral Society has regional offices in New Jersey, New York and Florida. For more information, visit [www.LittoralSociety.org](http://www.LittoralSociety.org).*

Federal Tax ID: 22 173 1073



**RESOLUTION NO. 2017-302**

**City of Asbury Park  
County of Monmouth  
State of New Jersey**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL OCEAN ACTION  
PLANT**

**WHEREAS**, healthy ocean eco-systems and sustainable ocean uses are a benefit to quality of life for residents of New Jersey by ensuring the ocean's environmental and economic attributes continue to provide for future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, Asbury Park strives to support actions which protect tourism, assure clean and healthy water, and improve the working and living environments of the ocean as steps to building a collaborative and respectful ocean user community that will thrive well into the new century; and

**WHEREAS**, Asbury Park hereby acknowledges that the residents of Asbury Park desire a healthy, thriving, and sustainable future for themselves, future generations, and our ocean; and

**WHEREAS**, Asbury Park wishes to support a Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP) which benefits our residents and our ocean now and far into the future by exploring and adopting collaborative and coordinated federal, state and local government practices; and

**WHEREAS**, by supporting the implementation of a strong Mid-Atlantic Regional OAP Asbury Park is enabling the process to allow community members and additional stakeholders the opportunity to engage further and have their voices heard regarding planning for sustainable uses and healthy ocean ecosystem practices as outlined in the accompanying "What Will Ocean Planning Do"; and

**WHEREAS**, as elected representatives of Asbury Park, we have a significant responsibility to provide leadership which will seek to protect our coastal economy and healthy ocean ecosystems to strengthen our New Jersey coast and ocean.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Asbury Park wishes to support the Mid-Atlantic Regional OAP on matters of a healthy ocean ecosystem and sustainable uses, the Asbury Park City Council wishes to pursue public and private actions that will lead to the continuation of a strong, protective plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the City Council of Asbury Park that we do

hereby send notice to New Jersey Sixth Congressional District Congressman Pallone and copy to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, State of NJ RPB member (NJDEP) to acknowledge Asbury Park's support for the continuation of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan and process and request all to extend their support on all federal and/or state issues involving the planning process on behalf of Asbury Park.

I, CINDY A. DYE, City Clerk of the City of Asbury Park, Monmouth County, New Jersey, DO HEREBY CERTIFY the foregoing to be a true and exact copy of RESOLUTION NO. 2017-302 which was finally adopted by the City Council at a meeting held on the 27th day of September, 2017

CERTIFIED BY ME THIS 28th DAY OF September, 2017.

CINDY A. DYE  
CITY CLERK

| ✓ Vote Record - Resolution 2017-302         |                |        |                                     |                          |                          |                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                                             |                |        | Yes/Aye                             | No/Nay                   | Abstain                  | Absent                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted |                |        |                                     |                          |                          |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted as Amended |                |        |                                     |                          |                          |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated           |                |        |                                     |                          |                          |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tabled             |                |        |                                     |                          |                          |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn          |                |        |                                     |                          |                          |                                     |
|                                             | Eileen Chapman | Voter  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
|                                             | Yvonne Clayton | Second | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
|                                             | Jesse Kendle   | Mover  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
|                                             | Amy Quinn      | Voter  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                                             | John Moor      | Voter  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |



**Resolution 2017-193  
Borough of Bradley Beach Supporting  
The Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan**

WHEREAS, healthy ocean eco-systems and sustainable ocean uses are a benefit to quality of life for residents of New Jersey by ensuring that the ocean’s environmental and economic attributes continue to provide for future generations

WHEREAS, the Borough of Bradley Beach strives to support actions which protect tourism, assure clean and healthy water, and improve the working and living environments of the ocean as steps to building a collaborative and respectful ocean user community that will thrive well into the new century; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Bradley Beach hereby acknowledges that the residents of Bradley Beach desire a healthy, thriving, and sustainable future for themselves, future generations, and our ocean; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Bradley Beach wishes to support a Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan (OAP) which benefits our residents and our ocean now and far into the future by exploring and adopting collaborative and coordinated federal, state and local government practices; and

WHEREAS, by supporting the implementation of a strong Mid-Atlantic OAP the Borough of Bradley Beach is enabling the process to allow community members and additional stakeholders the opportunity to engage further and have their voices heard regarding planning for sustainable uses and healthy ocean ecosystem practices; and

WHEREAS, as elected representatives of the Borough of Bradley Beach, we have a significant responsibility to provide leadership which will seek to protect our coastal economy and healthy ocean ecosystems to strengthen our New Jersey coast and ocean: NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Borough of Bradley Beach wishes to support the Mid-Atlantic OAP on matters of sustainable uses and healthy ocean ecosystems and, the Borough of Bradley Beach’s Mayor and Council wishes to pursue public and private actions that will lead to the continuation of a strong, protective plan.

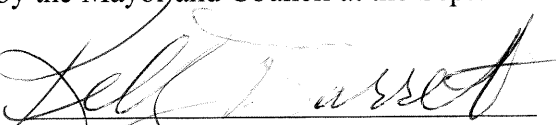
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bradley Beach that we do hereby send notice to **New Jersey’s Fourth Congressional District and copy to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, State of NJ RPB Elizabeth Semple of NJDEP]** to acknowledge Bradley Beach’s support for the continuation of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan and process and request she to extend their support on all federal and/or state issues involving the planning process on behalf of the Borough of Bradley Beach.

Seconded by Councilman Goldfarb and adopted upon the following vote:

|                 | AYES | NAYS | ABSTAIN | ABSENT |
|-----------------|------|------|---------|--------|
| Mr. Weber       | X    |      |         |        |
| Mr. Goldfarb    | X    |      |         |        |
| Mr. Bonnell     | X    |      |         |        |
| Mr. Cotler      | X    |      |         |        |
| Mayor Engelstad | X    |      |         |        |

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Kelly Barrett, Municipal Clerk, Borough of Bradley Beach, Monmouth County, New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Mayor and Council at the September 26, 2017 meeting.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 KELLY BARRETT, RMC, CMR  
 Municipal Clerk

#17-355-R

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY, COUNTY OF OCEAN,  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY, SUPPORTING THE MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL  
OCEAN ACTION PLAN**

September 25, 2017

WHEREAS, healthy ocean eco-systems and sustainable ocean uses are a benefit to quality of life for residents of New Jersey by ensuring the ocean's environmental and economic attributes continue to provide for future generations; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley Township strives to support actions which protect tourism, assure clean and healthy water, and improve the working and living environments of the ocean as steps to building a collaborative and respectful ocean user community that will thrive well into the new century; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley Township hereby acknowledges that our residents desire a healthy, thriving, and sustainable future for themselves, future generations, and our ocean; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley Township wishes to support a Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP) which benefits our residents and our ocean now and far into the future by exploring and adopting collaborative and coordinated federal, state and local government practices; and

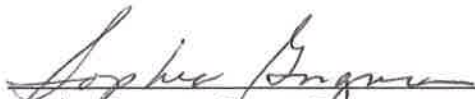
WHEREAS, by supporting the implementation of a strong Mid-Atlantic Regional OAP Berkeley Township is enabling the process to allow community members and additional stakeholders the opportunity to engage further and have their voices heard regarding planning for sustainable uses and healthy ocean ecosystem practices; and

WHEREAS, as elected representatives of Berkeley Township, we have a significant responsibility to provide leadership which will seek to protect our coastal economy and healthy ocean ecosystems to strengthen our New Jersey coast and ocean;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Berkeley Township wishes to support the Mid-Atlantic Regional OAP on matters of a healthy ocean ecosystem and sustainable uses, the Township Council wishes to pursue public and private actions that will lead to the continuation of a strong, protective plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Council requests that Congressman Thomas MacArthur extend the Township's support on all federal and/or state issues involving the planning process on behalf of Berkeley Township.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by Township Council of Berkeley Township that we do hereby send notice to Congressman Thomas MacArthur, and copy to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, State of NJ RPB member NJDEP to acknowledge Berkeley Township's support for the continuation of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan and process.



Sophia Gingrich, Council President

L. Thomas Grosse, Council Vice President

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Beverly M Carle, do hereby certify the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Governing Body of the Township of Berkeley at a meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2017.



BEVERLY M CARLE, RMC

Municipal Clerk, Township of Berkeley

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <[boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov](mailto:boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov)>  
Date: Wed, Nov 29, 2017 at 2:48 PM  
Subject: Re: Drafts  
To: John Prince <[johnhprince1@gmail.com](mailto:johnhprince1@gmail.com)>

Thank you, the RPB welcomes and considers comments submitted to this email address at any time. However, for the Ocean Action Plan specifically, the comment period on the draft ocean action plan closed on September 6, 2016, as per the Federal Register Notice, so your comments on that document will be considered in the course of plan implementation. The RPB encourages you to check the website (<https://www.boem.gov/MidA-New/>) for updated information and materials, including this report which was recently posted:

- [Options for indicator development, monitoring, assessment, and reporting for the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean ecosystem: To support Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Healthy Ocean Ecosystem Action 5, Final report prepared for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean](#)

On Wed, Nov 29, 2017 at 2:29 PM, John Prince <[johnhprince1@gmail.com](mailto:johnhprince1@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thank you. I understand it is just a political boundary situation and not a scientific boundary situation. If we are dealing with the larger scientific boundaries as a way to group states and regions, then Virginia really needs to be with the South Atlantic region including North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia.

Our comments closed now or can I still make any? And can you send me a link as to where I could make comments?

John Prince  
7573321562

On Nov 29, 2017, at 2:21 PM, MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM <[boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov](mailto:boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov)> wrote:

Thank you for the message concerning southeast Virginia. Bob LaBelle has retired, but we will share your comments with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB), including the state co-lead, Laura McKay (Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program manager; [laura.mckay@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:laura.mckay@deq.virginia.gov)) and post them on the [RPB website](#). The Mid-Atlantic RPB (New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) was defined by state, not natural, boundaries, and is now implementing its [Ocean Action Plan](#) and [tracking progress](#). The South Atlantic States (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida) have not formed a regional planning body. The States and federal agencies continue to coordinate and use [ocean data](#). Please continue to contact the RPB and participate in [upcoming events](#).

On Tue, Nov 28, 2017 at 7:10 AM, john prince <[johnhprince1@gmail.com](mailto:johnhprince1@gmail.com)> wrote:

Mr LaBelle,

I emailed you some time back concerning Southeast Virginia's inclusion into this work of the Mid Atlantic region. So much of the drafts and comments are oriented toward the Northeast states: has anyone in Southeast Virginia other than me raised any concerns as to our being lumped into the Midatlantic rather than the South Atlantic study region where we naturally/botanically reside? While I know everyone involved has the best intentions, I (and many others) do have an authentic concern of Se Virginia being historically morphed into policy and land management of the Northeast.

Thank you

John Prince

Norfolk, Va

<https://www.facebook.com/PrinceLandscapes/>

Instagram as princelandscapes

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <[boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov](mailto:boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov)>  
Date: Thu, Nov 30, 2017 at 8:09 AM  
Subject: Re: Recommendations for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body from the November 2 ERA Workshop  
To: "Chase, Ali" <[achase@nrdc.org](mailto:achase@nrdc.org)>  
Cc: "McKay, Laura (DEQ)" <[Laura.McKay@deg.virginia.gov](mailto:Laura.McKay@deg.virginia.gov)>, "[darlene.finch@noaa.gov](mailto:darlene.finch@noaa.gov)" <[darlene.finch@noaa.gov](mailto:darlene.finch@noaa.gov)>, "[KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org](mailto:KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org)" <[KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org](mailto:KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org)>, "[MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov](mailto:MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov)" <[MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov](mailto:MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov)>

Thank you for the comments on behalf of several organizations regarding the Nov. 2 MidA RPB Ecologically Rich Areas Workshop hosted by MARCO. We appreciate your recommended next steps for this effort, and your active participation during the workshop in Crownsville, Maryland.

We will share your letter with 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.

Please check the RPB website for updated information (<https://www.boem.gov/MidA-New/>) and plan to participate in the next in-person public MidA RPB meeting on Jan. 24, 2018, in Philadelphia, PA.

On Wed, Nov 29, 2017 at 4:11 PM, Chase, Ali <[achase@nrdc.org](mailto:achase@nrdc.org)> wrote:

Attached please find a letter from several organizations regarding the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body's recent Ecologically Rich Areas Workshop. 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](http://www.nrdc.org)  
[NEW YORK, NY 10011](http://www.nrdc.org)  
T 212.727.4551

[ACHASE@NRDC.ORG](mailto:ACHASE@NRDC.ORG)

[NRDC.ORG](http://NRDC.ORG)

Please save paper.

Think before printing.

**American Littoral Society • National Aquarium • Natural Resources Defense Council •  
Surfrider Foundation • Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center • Wildlife Conservation Society**

November 29, 2017

Ms. Darlene Finch  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Coordinator  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Office for Coastal Management  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Tawes State Office Building – E2  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Ms. Laura McKay  
Program Manager  
Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program  
629 East Main Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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

***Submitted electronically via MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov***

**Re: Recommended Next Steps for Ecologically Rich Areas Work**

Dear Ms. Finch, Ms. Leonard, and Ms. McKay,

Thank you and the other Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB or RPB) members for hosting the November 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecologically Rich Areas (ERA) Workshop (Workshop).<sup>1</sup> We appreciate the Marine Life Data Analysis Team's (MDAT) exemplary efforts to populate the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal (Portal) with ocean life and human use data layers that help convey the workings of our offshore environment and their work to identify through outreach to the science community a subset of the Portal's over 6,000 marine life data layers that can serve as a guide to better understanding the value of our natural system. We applaud the RPB members' commitment to a scientifically sound ERA identification process and your regular engagement with stakeholders and the public to inform and solicit feedback on ERA data that all of us will find helpful in planning efforts.

Identifying a suite of ERAs<sup>2</sup> is more important than ever before. Healthy oceans are a crucial source of food, jobs, and recreation; the linchpin of a prosperous blue economy and a key component of the

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<sup>1</sup> Workshop materials are *available at* <https://www.boem.gov/Agenda-ERA-Workshop/>.

<sup>2</sup> ERAs are special ocean places which contribute significantly to overall ecosystem health by hosting a high diversity and/or abundance of wildlife or that are especially unique or sensitive. Different places may be special for different reasons – as noted in the RPB's *Synthesis Options Paper*, "An ERA could contain one or more of five different components: productivity,

quality of life for the millions who live along and come to visit the Atlantic shoreline. Knowing which areas keep our ocean system functioning provides all of us, from state to federal managers, businesses to environmental planners, a guide to places that warrant particularly careful consideration in siting decisions and which may be able to serve as refugia for wildlife in the face of climate change induced stresses like warming waters, which are shifting fish stocks northward, and ocean acidification that makes it harder for shellfish to grow their protective coverings and survive. Taking steps to conserve the functioning of ERAs does not mean closing them off to human use; activities may occur as long as the area's ecological value is conserved. Such an approach acknowledges the interdependency of a healthy ocean and regional coastal communities and economies that depend on its well-being.

We appreciate the opportunity to share with you the below recommendations<sup>3</sup> regarding how the RPB should continue to advance Healthy Ocean Ecosystem Action 1 in the *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* (Plan) to “[i]dentify ecologically rich areas of the ocean in the Mid-Atlantic region and increase understanding of those areas to foster more informed decision making.”<sup>4</sup>

#### **I. Post existing ERA component work on the Portal in early 2018.**

With businesses and other stakeholders increasingly turning to the Portal as a first step in understanding the prevalence of our region's offshore uses and marine life, it seems wise to highlight the data layers selected by the science community as key to understanding the region's ecological value. We urge you to move expeditiously to post the ERA component categories in the Portal's Marine Planner Data section, with the data layers nested beneath that best inform our understanding of each component. The components could be organized in a similar fashion to the “themes” found in the Human Use Data Synthesis (HUDS) tab, with the data layers useful to understanding each component listed beneath, much as they are now on the IEA (Important Ecological Area)/ ERA Data Evaluation project in SeaSketch.

The Northeast Regional Planning Body and ocean planning staff invested a great deal of effort from July 2016 through September 2017 to identify and vet appropriate data products for each component throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. A summary of this process states, “[o]verall, feedback was generally positive about the usefulness of the assembled datasets and the published methods that were chosen to develop them. Many individuals also noted key data gaps for each

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abundance, biodiversity, rarity and vulnerability. Understanding where these areas are and how they change seasonally and over longer periods of time is expected to result in better-informed management decisions.” See, *Synthesis Options Paper at 1*, available at: <https://www.boem.gov/ERA-Component-Synthesis-Options/>. Also, *Final Framework for the Identification of Ecologically Rich Areas*, available at: <https://www.boem.gov/Final-Framework-for-Identifying-ERAs/>. These categories are based on extensive dialogue with this region and the Northeast's science community, public comment on the *Draft Framework for Identification of Ecologically Rich Areas*, and a series of stakeholder workshops. Additional information on the Northeast Regional Planning Body's Ecosystem-Based Management Work Group is available at: <http://neoceanplanning.org/about/northeast-rpb/>.

<sup>3</sup> Given that there was some confusion surrounding what was envisioned by the RPB synthesis options, we are presenting our recommendations irrespective of which options they might be best defined by.

<sup>4</sup> See, Plan at 40, available at: <https://www.boem.gov/Ocean-Action-Plan/>.

component that represent important considerations when using the data or when identifying regional science and research priorities.”<sup>5</sup>

As a result, we strongly recommend moving ahead and posting disclaimer notices<sup>6</sup> alongside the components noting any issues that have not yet been resolved by the scientific community by the end of 2017 or concerns raised about individual data layers. Disclaimer notices should include: 1.) a brief, easy-to-understand explanation for each component with any overarching caveats; 2.) information on where overlaps between data sets may exist (*e.g.*, Gini-Simpson Index and Shannon Index in Component 3, Abundance); and 3.) for layers where near-term (1-2 years)<sup>7</sup> potential next steps have been identified, the nature and anticipated timing for those updates (*e.g.*, animations for dynamic ocean features in Component 1, Productivity/ Habitat and oceanographic drivers).

**While it may seem optimal to resolve all outstanding issues before going “live” online, the fact is that agencies, businesses, and stakeholders are using the Portal to inform decisions now.** As such, even imperfect information with the appropriate cautions stated is an improvement over the status quo. Just as the HUDS products “offer a first step toward human use data synthesis that can be built upon in the future,”<sup>8</sup> the components’ data layers can be updated in the future, as needed. Where larger questions exist surrounding data that will not be available in the near-term (*e.g.*, a layer representing functional diversity for Component 2, Biodiversity or the possibility of mathematically calculating spatially rare habitats for Component 5, Rarity), we recommend that the RPB stress the potential value of the currently available information, while tabling these questions until sufficient data becomes available for further exploration.

## **II. Develop several synthesized layers to advance decision-making.**

Even with a whittled down subset of data layers binned for each component, Portal users remain disadvantaged without the ability to classify and overlay multiple layers. Pulling up more than two data layers is visually confusing and toggling between a series of maps is not efficient and possibly not effective. It was estimated at the Workshop that between 77 and 142 layers have been identified that address ecological richness. For example, Component 1, Productivity – identified as having the least potential number of data layers – currently contains between 9 and 17 individual data layers. As noted in the Plan:

Synthesis products provide a means to distill hundreds of data layer and time period combinations into more simplified maps that supplement the base-layer reference library. These summary products are useful tools for seeing broad patterns in the underlying data or model results. They also provide ocean resource managers and stakeholders with the ability

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<sup>5</sup> See, *Summary of the review process, feedback received, and remaining questions for draft data products and methods relevant to the components of ecologically rich areas (from the Ecologically Rich Areas Framework in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan)* (Summary) at 2, available at: <https://www.boem.gov/ERA-data-methods-review-results/>.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the Our Coast, Our Future website, which provides California sea level and storm maps, activates a disclaimer page before users can access the interactive mapping tool. Planner available at: <http://data.pointblue.org/apps/ocof/cms/index.php?page=flood-map>.

<sup>7</sup> Near-term, as defined by Summary at 4, available at: <https://www.boem.gov/ERA-data-methods-review-results/>.

<sup>8</sup> See, Plan at 90.

to quickly identify the key ecological characteristics of a particular ocean location and the specific species layers that may require more attention, consideration, or study.<sup>9</sup>

Data synthesis that bundles together several map layers within a component is therefore a logical next step in our collective effort to understand and communicate the presence of key ecological areas. Just as the Portal's core abundance/ biomass area maps provide a useful synthesis of multiple avian (or marine mammal or fish) groups, it would be helpful to present a set of data layers within a component on the same map layer to help reveal any broad ecological patterns (*e.g.*, a map of core abundance for avian, fish, and marine mammals). It would also be useful to create slider bars to aid the visualization of the synthesized data layers, which would enable users to show areas that meet their own individual determination of "high value" based on a series of provided quantiles/ percentiles. **We strongly recommend that peer reviewed science be used to provide *recommended* statistical cutoffs.**

Classifying and overlaying data in this manner allows simpler illustrations of areas with high values, while retaining the individual components as base layers for transparency and review in case questions arise as to why the model output shows a particular outcome. If component data layers were instead combined through the creation of a new index, a simpler visual outcome might result, but it would not be possible to pick apart the final combined map to see if any layers drive any revealed patterns.

**We recommend the following set of data synthesis products for development and posting by mid-2018:**<sup>10</sup>

- Component 1, Productivity/ Habitat and oceanographic drivers: Sea surface temperature (SST) fronts serve as a proxy for important oceanographic dynamics that occur around significant bathymetric features like the submarine canyons and the continental shelf. We recommend a SST synthesis layer representing seasonal SST frontal edge probability combined in a single annual synthesis data layer. To factor in seasons equally, seasonal SST front layers should be normalized and then averaged to create an annual layer. We further recommend that an additional map layer be integrated that factors persistent areas of anticyclonic and cyclonic eddy activity.
- Component 2, Biodiversity: A map layer showing annual all bird species richness, all fish species richness from the North East Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) surveys, and all fish species and cetacean species using the Simpson Index, which factors in both species richness (a simple count of how many species are in a select location which does not describe

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<sup>9</sup> See, Plan at 85.

<sup>10</sup> We strongly recommend that, as the MDAT has carefully and consistently done throughout its work, peer review be conducted for any new synthesis products for which scientific peer review has not already approved the appropriate modeling protocol and addressed questions reconciling data layer units (*e.g.*, different abundance measures). While the scientific process, by its very nature, cannot produce uncontested results, peer review ensures that the scientific community has assessed the validity of a model or method to the best of its ability, minimizing any subjectivity.



population distribution) and the relative abundance of each species.<sup>11</sup> We would also benefit from seasonal maps for the above layers, should resources allow.

- Component 3, Abundance: A map layer showing ranked relative core abundance/ biomass area richness for avian, marine mammals, and fish species.
- Component 4, Vulnerability: A map layer showing inherently sensitive species/ habitats which contains: discrete deep sea coral management zones as defined by the regional fishery management councils, eelgrass beds, shellfish habitat, Coastal Critical Habitat Designations as defined by the Endangered Species Act, coastal wetlands, sponges, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) CetMap Biologically Important Areas (BIAs), Habitat Areas of Particular Concern and Essential Fish Habitat areas which were designated by regional fisheries management councils due to vulnerability, and total relative abundance of Bird Conservation Region (BCR30) highest, high, and moderate priority avian species.
- Component 5, Rarity: A map layer showing regionally rare species which includes discrete deep sea coral management zones as defined by the regional fishery management councils, Coastal Critical Habitat Designations, total relative abundance of BCR30 priority avian species, and BIAs.

Please note that, as stated above, we recommend assembling data layers for Component 4, Vulnerability, that reveal places containing species or habitats of inherent sensitivity/ fragility and to clearly note that overall vulnerability is the premise for inclusion in this category. There is great value in developing synthesis layers that could reveal stressor-based sensitivity for particular subsets of marine life, but we recommend soliciting requests from agency staff and stakeholders at a RPB meeting in 2018 before elaborating further on this type of synthesis product.

All individual marine life base layers should remain on the Portal for reviewers to peruse in greater detail. Portal base layer data should be updated as available and applied to any synthesized models; that we are constantly learning about ocean life shouldn't prevent the creation and use of helpful synthesized layers. For example, as the Spring trawl survey data for fisheries is made available online, any synthesis products relying on fisheries data, for example, can be updated.

Rolling up a select few component data layers as described above will help convey to the public and businesses, more simply, that ecologically rich areas exist. This work ties directly to Healthy Ocean Ecosystem Action 1 to “[i]dentify ecologically rich areas of the ocean in the Mid-Atlantic region and increase understanding of those areas to foster more informed decision making.”<sup>12</sup> The synthesis products proposed above can inform agency decision-making on a host of disparate issues, from

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<sup>11</sup> As we believe a map layer would be useful which ensures that rarer species are not overshadowed by more populous species or ones which have received greater monitoring, we recommend using the Simpson Index to show relative diversity as it is the more meaningful measure in terms of evenness (*i.e.*, relative abundance) and is less sensitive to sample size. That said, others have recommended using the Shannon Index and we would find it helpful to see an additional synthetic biodiversity layer which substitutes the Shannon Index for the Simpson Index, should resources allow for this.

<sup>12</sup> See, Plan at 40.

shipping to offshore wind siting, by giving voice to our marine wildlife and providing a shared basis for discussions with stakeholders and the public of how best to advance development in a manner responsive to the marine life offshore and the citizens who celebrate and depend on its health. A more educated and engaged stakeholder base allows for greater transparency and a more defensible decision-making process for agency staff. It serves the stated purpose of the Portal which “consolidates available data and enables regional ocean planners and ocean users to visualize and analyze ocean resources and human use information ... [It] provides baseline information as well as building blocks for more transparent, coordinated, and informed ocean management, information sharing, and stakeholder engagement.”<sup>13</sup>

Synthesis products that focus on human use impacts, while helpful, have more limited scopes by design. As vulnerability is further fleshed out by stressor, maps that address human use/ marine life conflicts should be identified and prioritized for development, but at this juncture we recommend synthesis maps that help convey the existing locations of ecologically rich areas.

### **III. Incorporate additional tools in early-mid 2018 to help Portal users visualize and understand data.**

We strongly support the addition of tools to convey ERA components, statistical modeling approaches, synthesized data layers, and an overview of the scientific peer review process. Great value exists in adding to the Portal both technical tools, including time and value sliders, animations, color schemes, and the ability to place layers side by side,<sup>14</sup> and communications tools like story maps<sup>15</sup> and clearly written data disclaimers. These tools can help all Portal users, but should be designed for a lay audience who may be overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information, but are committed to using the Portal to try and make sense of a proposed project that could impact their current ocean use.

We recommend selecting a communications consultant well versed in breaking down scientific jargon to work with the MDAT team and RPB in development of communications tools and suggest that this effort launch in early-mid 2018. This communications work should not hold up posting of component data layers, with updated information substituted for older disclaimers on a rolling basis, nor the posting of pieces that accompany new MDAT synthesis projects as they become available in mid-2018. As with all tools, user error can occur, but taking steps to explain the data and its limitations can advance overall understanding and elevate marine use planning conservations to a more sophisticated and productive level for everyone involved in offshore decision-making.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts from the recent Workshop with you and for your inclusive approach to the ERA work. We deeply support this effort and urge you to undertake the steps described above to 1.) post existing ERA component work on by the Portal in early 2018; 2.) develop and

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<sup>13</sup> See, Plan at 17.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Cal-Adapt, which shows climate-related hazards (and expected changes in those hazards), provides a series of technical tools that allow for individual preferences in a range of model outputs. Available at: <http://cal-adapt.org/>.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, *Predicting Cetacean Density with Geospatial Models* at <http://goo.gl/yTM9fH>.

post by mid-2018 several additional synthesized layers to help make the work more accessible and digestible to stakeholders and agency officials; and 3.) incorporate additional visualization tools and guidance into the Portal in early-mid 2018. We look forward to continuing to work with the RPB to identify ERAs and help ensure the long-term health of our ocean life.

Sincerely,

Alison Chase  
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From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <[boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov](mailto:boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov)>  
Date: Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 7:47 AM  
Subject: Re: Options for Synthesis of ERA Component Data  
To: Brent Greenfield <[brent.greenfield@oceanpolicy.com](mailto:brent.greenfield@oceanpolicy.com)>

Thank you for providing comments from the National Ocean Policy Coalition on Options for Synthesis of Ecologically Rich Area Component Data. We appreciate your feedback and your participation in the Nov. 2 MidA RPB Ecologically Rich Areas Workshop via webinar, hosted by MARCO.

We will share your letter with 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.

Please check the RPB website for updated information (<https://www.boem.gov/MidA-New/>) and plan to participate in the next in-person public MidA RPB meeting on Jan. 24, 2018, in Philadelphia, PA.

On Thu, Nov 30, 2017 at 6:08 PM, Brent Greenfield <[brent.greenfield@oceanpolicy.com](mailto:brent.greenfield@oceanpolicy.com)> wrote:  
Attached please find comments from the National Ocean Policy Coalition on Options for Synthesis of Ecologically Rich Area Component Data.

Sincerely,  
Brent

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November 30, 2017

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*Submitted Electronically via MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov*

**RE: Options for Synthesis of Ecologically Rich Area Component Data**

Dear Ms. Croft, Ms. McKay, and Ms. Leonard:

The National Ocean Policy Coalition (“Coalition”) submits the following comments to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (“RPB”) in response to the request for input on Ecologically Rich Area (“ERA”) data synthesis options.<sup>1</sup> For the reasons outlined below, the Coalition urges the RPB to suspend its efforts to identify ERAs. Should the RPB nonetheless continue these activities, the Coalition urges the RPB to commit to Option 1 by not undertaking any further synthesis of ERA component data.

At the outset, and as underscored in the Coalition’s July 20, 2017 letter to the RPB on the 2017 Draft Annual Work Plan and Progress Report,<sup>2</sup> the Coalition continues to urge the RPB not to proceed with further implementation of Plan actions including but not limited to the identification and application of ERAs and related data products unless and until, among other things, RPB agencies have clearly and transparently explained and achieved user group consensus on both (1) how agencies intend to incorporate and apply such actions in their activities and decision-making, and (2) any related agency implementing instructions, including through the use of mechanisms for formal public notice and comment proceedings and compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act (APA).

While the RPB continues to consider actions including the identification of ERAs, it remains unclear how RPB agencies specifically intend to use related products in their activities, despite the previous commitment that federal agencies and their relevant counterparts represented on the RPB would, among other things, “describe

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.boem.gov/ERA-Component-Synthesis-Options/>.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.boem.gov/Comments-on-Draft-Annual-Work-Plan/>.

the way the agency will use the Plan to inform and guide its actions and decisions in or affecting the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning area” and “explain its use of the Plan” in its activities.<sup>3</sup>

As the Coalition previously commented,<sup>4</sup> actions involving the identification and regulatory application of ERAs are of great concern to commercial and recreational interests. Identifying and applying ERAs in the absence of legislatively-established criteria and guidance threatens to introduce significant legal uncertainty and potential statutory conflicts and increase the risk that such products could be misused or misinterpreted. The absence of clear and specific information on how agencies would implement and apply the ERA actions in their activities further increases their associated risks and uncertainties, makes public engagement and reviews of minimal or no value, and is inconsistent with the RPB’s previous commitments to make such information available. The lack of analyses on the potential consequences and statutory basis for agency implementation of ERA-related actions compounds such risks.

If the RPB continues to pursue Plan implementation in the absence of the information described above, the Coalition therefore urges the RPB to suspend its efforts to identify and apply ERAs and related data products. In the event that the RPB nonetheless continues to pursue the identification of ERAs and development and application of related data products, the Coalition strongly urges the RPB to commit to Option 1 and not undertake any further synthesis of ERA component data.


In such a scenario, before any ERA-related data products are finalized or published, in addition to providing an easily-accessible public portal for all draft ERA data products to be reviewed, the Coalition also urges the RPB to commit to providing for public review and comment draft language that clearly, conspicuously, and comprehensively explains the data collected, all related caveats and limitations, what the data products do and do not represent, how data products are intended to be interpreted, and how each agency intends to use the data.

Options 2 and 3 would both further compound the risks associated with the development and application of ERA-related products. Specifically, under Option 2’s “Classify and Overlay” approach, classifying geographic locations as “areas with high values” in order to visually highlight the overlap of such areas would be inherently subjective and increase the likelihood that such images are misinterpreted or misused in a manner that ultimately and unnecessarily harms economic activity. Option 3’s “Classify and Combine” approach would go even further by creating index scores for ERA component datasets in order to identify the very highest overlap areas, with the highest values in each new index possibly used to highlight an ERA.

Regardless of the synthesis option chosen, the RPB should refrain from taking any further action unless and until, among other things, RPB agencies have clearly and transparently explained and achieved user group consensus on both (1) how agencies intend to incorporate and apply Plan actions including but not limited to those related to ERA-related products in their activities and decision-making, and (2) any related agency implementing instructions, including through the use of mechanisms for formal public notice and comment proceedings and compliance with the APA.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Brent D. Greenfield  
Executive Director  
National Ocean Policy Coalition

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-03/pdf/2016-26623.pdf>. See also <https://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Plan-Adoption-Memo/>.

<sup>4</sup> See [https://gallery.mailchimp.com/6bb66fed099f6eb4e4253667e/files/NOPC\\_Comments\\_on\\_Draft\\_MidA\\_OAP\\_.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/6bb66fed099f6eb4e4253667e/files/NOPC_Comments_on_Draft_MidA_OAP_.pdf).