

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Tue, Apr 28, 2015 at 1:38 PM
Subject: Re: seismic air gun testing in the Atlantic
To: Michael Basilone <mwbasilone@yahoo.com>

Thank you for submitting comments concerning uses of the ocean. The Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB) will consider all input received, and will post your message on the written public comments section of the MidA RPB website.

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

You may also want to view the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) website for information about the Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program and other Atlantic activities, including how to provide input on those issues:

<http://www.boem.gov/Atlantic-Region/>
<http://www.boem.gov/Five-Year-Program-2017-2022/>
<http://boemoceaninfo.com/>

On Tue, Apr 28, 2015 at 10:16 AM, Michael Basilone <mwbasilone@yahoo.com> wrote:
Please do not allow this seismic air gun testing in the Atlantic. The danger to marine mammals is too great. These animals help our coastal communities generate millions in tourism money that we desperately need to keep us employed. Also please do not allow offshore oil drilling for the same reasons..

Thank You,
Mike Basilone

From: **Matt Gove** <mgove@surfrider.org>
Date: Thu, May 28, 2015 at 11:48 AM
Subject: Re: Draft OAP Schedule
To: Robert LaBelle <robert.labelle@boem.gov>
Cc: "gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thanks Bob!

Matt

On Wed, May 27, 2015 at 10:48 PM, Robert LaBelle <robert.labelle@boem.gov> wrote:
Matt,

Thank you for your email. We are in discussion with the NOC and the work schedule is subject to revision if the RPB decides to modify our initial estimates. We will post any such mods online as they occur. Thanks for letting us know your position on this.

Bob

On May 27, 2015, at 5:19 PM, Matt Gove <mgove@surfrider.org> wrote:

Bob, Gwynne, and Kelsey,

Hope you guys are well! Thanks much for hosting the webinar last week, webinars are very helpful for us trying to stay current on RPB activities, and to pass that information onto others.

I had a few questions that there wasn't enough time to get to on the webinar, but the one I'm most concerned about is the timing of the draft OAP submittal to the NOC.

I spoke with Beth Kerttula a few weeks ago at the Blue Vision Summit, and she seemed to feel that November 2016 was not enough time for her shop to review and approve by the end of the year.

I think there is enough wiggle room to move the timeline up by a couple of months, but you would need to move as soon as possible to revise the schedule so that everyone knows that is the situation--including all the various contracts!

Please let me know if you have thought any further on the schedule--thanks!!

Matt

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation
mgove@surfrider.org
[952-250-4545](tel:952-250-4545)

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Fri, Jul 10, 2015 at 3:02 PM
Subject: Re: Recommendations on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Work Plan and the Regional Ocean Assessment Workgroup's White Paper
To: "Chase, Alison" <achase@nrdc.org>
Cc: "Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov" <Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov>, "Gwynne Schultz -DNR- (gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov)" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thank you for submitting comments to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. The MidA RPB will consider all comments received, and will post them on its website.

On Fri, Jul 10, 2015 at 2:21 PM, Chase, Alison <achase@nrdc.org> wrote:

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

Sincerely,

Ali Chase

**American Littoral Society • Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island •
Maryland Coastal Bays Program • Miami2Maine • National Aquarium •
Natural Resources Defense Council • SandyHook SeaLife Foundation • Surfrider
Foundation • Wild Oceans • Wildlife Conservation Society**

July 10, 2015

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Co-Leads:

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

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

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

Submitted electronically

Re: Recommendations on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Work Plan and the Regional Ocean Assessment Workgroup's White Paper

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

Thank you, and the other members of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB), for your continued efforts to develop a strong Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan (OAP or Plan) to improve our ocean's health and safeguard the many sustainable uses that rely on its continued functioning. We are excited to see the renewed energy surrounding the Plan's development and look forward to working closely with you over this final year and a half to shape and finalize a substantive Plan.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on your recently released Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Work Plan (Work Plan)[\[1\]](#) and the Regional Ocean Assessment Workgroup's (ROA Workgroup) new white paper, *A Brief Overview of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean: Characteristics, Trends, and Challenges*, (ROA White Paper).[\[2\]](#) The below comments build from our questions and concerns raised on the May 22nd webinar.[\[3\]](#)

I. The draft OAP should go out for public comment in early May 2016 and be delivered to the National Ocean Council for approval in August 2016.

We strongly recommend that the RPB deliver a draft OAP in August 2016 to the National Ocean Council (NOC) for concurrence. If the draft Plan is sent to the NOC in November, as is currently called for in the Work Plan,[\[4\]](#) it will not allow enough time for NOC review and approval by this Administration. NOC approval is critical as it is only by the NOC's official signoff that the Plan will come to life: "By [NOC] concurrence, Federal agencies agree that they will use the marine plan to inform and guide their actions in the region consistent with their existing missions and authorities."[\[5\]](#) This Administration created the planning body process with the establishment of the National Ocean Policy in 2010[\[6\]](#) and has participated in all steps of the RPB; Plan review and concurrence should occur under this Administration.

We suggest releasing a draft OAP for public comment in early May and conducting a public review process in May and June that includes a series of listening sessions and webinars. The RPB will be able to

integrate public comments into the Plan in July and early August before delivering the Plan in late August to the NOC.

II. The RPB should continue to actively engage the public and stakeholders in Plan development and coordinate closely with the Northeast Regional Planning Body.

To streamline OAP review, we urge the RPB to engage in discussions with the public and affected stakeholders early and often regarding possible Plan actions. We appreciate that agencies often want to internally finalize ideas before vetting them publicly, but open and transparent discussions of potential actions throughout Plan development, including over the course of this summer and fall, will result in a stronger, more meaningful Plan that tackles the region's challenges. We urge you to add more public engagement opportunities to the list of upcoming meetings^[7] and to encourage the selected contractors for the ecological data synthesis, human use data synthesis, and Regional Ocean Assessment to hold webinars to further educate interested parties about their important work.

We also urge the RPB to coordinate its data products and associated actions with the Northeast Regional Planning Body (Northeast RPB). Many of the ocean management issues the Plan hopes to address are not unique to this region and we hope that the parallel tracks each region is following can lead to actions relevant throughout the Atlantic seaboard. It is particularly important that the ecological and human use data layers under development in both regions share similar methodologies so that the results are comparable and can be potentially combined into seamless data sets or maps.

III. The Plan must identify ways to protect and restore ecologically important places from threats they may face.

We are excited about the Data Synthesis Workgroup's effort to advance region-wide and area-specific maps depicting centers of species richness and diversity^[8] and believe it is essential that these new products, combined with the new human intensity maps, inform the Interjurisdictional (IJC) Coordination Workgroup's efforts. Agency guidance is what will bring this Plan to life. Armed with knowledge of where our ecologically important places are, the RPB must flesh out the compatibility of expected uses with these areas and seek to protect the areas so that they continue to function as they must in order to protect ocean health and the coastal communities, jobs, food, and recreation that rely on a healthy ocean.

The ecological and human use data products under development are not end results in and of themselves. The Plan should identify actions, including performance standards and mitigation measures, to avoid and minimize the impacts to ecologically important areas and to support sustainable uses. The Plan should include guidance to protect our ocean ecosystem and encourage sustainable use.

The RPB's Ocean *Action* Plan should result in visible management improvements, not just promises for future consideration, if this regional planning effort is to live up to its promise to conduct our ocean business for the better and achieve the region's Healthy Ocean Ecosystem Goal to "Promote ocean ecosystem health, functionality, and integrity through conservation, protection, enhancement, and restoration."^[9] This effort is envisioned in the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* (Final Recommendations), which states that regional ocean planning should "improve ecosystem health and services by planning human uses in concert with the conservation of important ecological areas, such as areas of high productivity and biological diversity; areas and key species that are critical to ecosystem function and resiliency; areas of spawning, breeding, and feeding; areas of rare or functionally vulnerable marine resources; and migratory corridors ... [regional ocean planning] *ultimately is intended to result in protection of areas that are essential for the resiliency and maintenance of healthy ecosystem services and biological diversity, and to maximize the ability of marine resources to continue to support a wide variety of human uses.*"^[10] It is critical that once the ecological data products are developed, IJC actions be created that advance ocean protections.

IV. The RPB should take steps to create an ocean health index that serves as a baseline against which to measure the progress toward our overall goal of ecosystem health for the Mid-Atlantic region.

It's impossible to manage what you don't measure. In addition to identifying and protecting a network of important ecological areas, the Data Synthesis Workgroup, in coordination with the science community, should take steps to develop an ocean health index that allows the RPB and the public to monitor our success in securing the region's ocean health over time.

One excellent example of an ocean health index is the Puget Sound Dashboard of Vital Signs. This product identifies the area's key components for a healthy ecosystem (e.g., estuaries), the pressures facing them (e.g., construction of levies and dikes), indicators for these components (e.g., the aerial extent of eelgrass beds), and includes specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited – or SMART^[11] – objectives to attain improvements.^[12] Having measurable and meaningful objectives allows for regular checkups on marine health.

As a first step toward this kind of robust ecological restoration plan, we urge the RPB to begin to develop a Mid-Atlantic ocean health index by monitoring the particular ecological components identified in the Data Synthesis Workgroup's ecological data synthesis products. In the course of developing the methodology to identify a regional network of important ecological areas, this Workgroup will have essentially already selected many of

the region's key ecosystem components, the keystone and endangered species and identified the region's various habitat types. The Data Synthesis Workgroup as well as the Regional Ocean Assessment Workgroup will also have identified various environmental pressures. The Data Synthesis Workgroup should repurpose this information into the first stages of an ocean health index and work with scientists to identify indicators and begin the process of setting objectives. The RPB should run this work in parallel to the OAP development and continue to build from this index once the Plan is completed.

V. The Plan should focus on ocean health and sustainable uses.

We want to reiterate that the Plan should support the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework's focus on providing for *sustainable* use,[\[13\]](#) and not be used to consider offshore oil and gas exploration and development. These uses should not be housed under sustainable uses as they are in the ROA White Paper[\[14\]](#) and should not emerge in the Plan's guidance, given the RPB's overarching goals to provide for a healthy ocean ecosystem and sustainable ocean use.[\[15\]](#)

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to share these considerations with you. We urge you to update the Work Plan as soon as possible to address these concerns and include added stakeholder opportunities. We look forward to successfully developing these Plan products with you and to collaborating to achieve our shared goals for ocean protection and sustainable use.

Sincerely,

Alison Chase

Senior Policy Analyst

Natural Resources Defense Council

Matt Gove

Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Tim Dillingham
Executive Director
American Littoral Society

Pam Lyons Gromen
Executive Director
Wild Oceans

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

Roman Jesien
Interim Executive Director
Maryland Coastal Bays Program

Margo Pellegrino

Founder

Miami2Maine

Arthur H. Kopelman, PhD
President

Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island

Mary M. Hamilton

Executive Director
SandyHook SeaLife Foundation

Megan Driscoll

National Aquarium

ALISON CHASE

Senior Policy Analyst

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Please save paper.

Think before printing.

[1] Available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body-Work-Plan/>.

[2] Available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-ROA-summary-white-paper/>.

[3] Webinar materials available at: <http://www.boem.gov/MidA-RPB-Meetings/>.

[4] Work Plan at 2, available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body-Work-Plan/>.

[5] *Marine Planning Handbook at 17*, available at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/final_marine_planning_handbook.pdf.

[6] See, Executive Order 13547 – Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/executive-order-stewardship-ocean-our-coasts-and-great-lakes>.

[7] Events listed at <http://www.boem.gov/MidA-New/> include the July 13 webinar on data methodology approaches, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean stakeholder engagement workshop, and the RPB's September meeting.

[8] Please see the letter many of our groups submitted on November 20, 2014 re: Recommendations on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment and the Regional Ocean Action Plan for detailed recommendations regarding how to identify a representative network of important ecological areas.

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

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

[11] See, for example, Kershner, J., Samhour, J.F., James, C.A. and Levin, P.S. 2011. Selecting Indicator Portfolios for Marine Species and Food Webs: A Puget Sound Case Study. *PLoS ONE* 6(10): e25248. Available at <http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0025248>.; Ehler, Charles; A Guide to Evaluating Marine Spatial Plans, Paris, UNESCO, 2014. *IOC Manuals and Guides*, 70; ICAM Dossier 8. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002277/227779e.pdf>.

[12] See Puget Sound Partnership Vital Signs at <http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/eelgrass.php>.

[13] Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework at 6-9, available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework/>.

[14] ROA White Paper at 15, 21, available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-ROA-summary-white-paper/>.

[15] Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework at 6-9, available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework/>.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Mon, Sep 28, 2015 at 8:52 AM
Subject: Re: Fisheries Survival Fund letter to Mid-Atlantic RPB
To: AHawkins@kelleydrye.com

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

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

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

From: **Hawkins, Anne** <AHawkins@kelleydrye.com>
Date: Wed, Sep 23, 2015 at 10:23 AM
Subject: Fisheries Survival Fund letter to Mid-Atlantic RPB
To: "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, "joe.atangan@navy.mil" <joe.atangan@navy.mil>, "christine.mintz@navy.mil" <christine.mintz@navy.mil>, "kevin.chu@noaa.gov" <kevin.chu@noaa.gov>, "darlene.finch@noaa.gov" <darlene.finch@noaa.gov>, "patrick.gilman@ee.doe.gov" <patrick.gilman@ee.doe.gov>, "lucas.feinberg@ee.doe.gov" <lucas.feinberg@ee.doe.gov>, "terron.hillsman@md.usda.gov" <terron.hillsman@md.usda.gov>, "michael.h.jones1@navy.mil" <michael.h.jones1@navy.mil>, "john.kennedy@dot.gov" <john.kennedy@dot.gov>, "jeffrey.flumignan@dot.gov" <jeffrey.flumignan@dot.gov>, "robert.labelle@boem.gov" <robert.labelle@boem.gov>, "leann.bullin@boem.gov" <leann.bullin@boem.gov>, "Lobue.Charles@epa.gov" <Lobue.Charles@epa.gov>, "anderson.kate@epa.gov" <anderson.kate@epa.gov>, "chris.p.scraba@uscg.mil" <chris.p.scraba@uscg.mil>, "douglas.c.simpson@uscg.mil" <douglas.c.simpson@uscg.mil>, "john.bull@mrc.virginia.gov" <john.bull@mrc.virginia.gov>, "john.clark@state.de.us" <john.clark@state.de.us>, "sarah.cooksey@state.de.us" <sarah.cooksey@state.de.us>, "kheffner@pa.gov" <kheffner@pa.gov>, "ginger.kopkash@dep.nj.gov" <ginger.kopkash@dep.nj.gov>, "elizabeth.semple@dep.nj.gov" <elizabeth.semple@dep.nj.gov>, "joe.martens@dec.ny.gov" <joe.martens@dec.ny.gov>, "kathleen.moser@dec.ny.gov" <kathleen.moser@dec.ny.gov>, "karen.chytalo@dec.ny.gov" <karen.chytalo@dec.ny.gov>, "karen.chytalo@dec.ny.gov" <karen.chytalo@dec.ny.gov>, "catherine.mccall@maryland.gov" <catherine.mccall@maryland.gov>, "laura.mckay@deq.virginia.gov" <laura.mckay@deq.virginia.gov>, "cesar.perales@dos.state.ny.us" <cesar.perales@dos.state.ny.us>, "cesar.perales@dos.state.ny.us" <cesar.perales@dos.state.ny.us>, "gregory.capobianco@dos.ny.gov" <gregory.capobianco@dos.ny.gov>, "michael.snyder@dos.ny.gov" <michael.snyder@dos.ny.gov>, "gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "azemba@state.pa.us" <azemba@state.pa.us>, "rgray58@hughes.net" <rgray58@hughes.net>, "rgray58@hughes.net" <rgray58@hughes.net>, "kmaccorm@gmail.com" <kmaccorm@gmail.com>, "kelseyleonard@shinnecock.org" <kelseyleonard@shinnecock.org>, "kelseyleonard@shinnecock.org" <kelseyleonard@shinnecock.org>, "wabush1@aol.com" <wabush1@aol.com>, "bpatterson@oneida-nation.org" <bpatterson@oneida-nation.org>, "michael.luisi@maryland.gov" <michael.luisi@maryland.gov>, "michael.luisi@maryland.gov" <michael.luisi@maryland.gov>, "Brian.Thompson@ct.gov" <Brian.Thompson@ct.gov>
Cc: "Frulla, David E." <DFrulla@kelleydrye.com>, "Minkiewicz, Andrew" <AMinkiewicz@kelleydrye.com>, "Izurieta, Jennipher" <JIzurieta@kelleydrye.com>, "kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org" <kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org>

Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body member,

The attached file is a letter from the Fisheries Survival Fund to the RPB regarding the development of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. I will distribute paper copies to members at an upcoming break and have extra copies at the meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or would like to discuss.

Best regards,

-Annie Hawkins

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Attachments area

Preview attachment Letter from FSF to MA RPB.pdf



Letter from FSF to MA RPB.pdf

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September 22, 2015

Robert LaBelle
Federal Co-Lead for Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
381 Elden Street
Herndon, Virginia 20170

Dear Mr. LaBelle and RPB members:

On behalf of the Fisheries Survival Fund (“FSF”), we submit the following comments on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body’s (“RPB’s”) work to develop the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (“ocean plan”) in advance of the RPB’s upcoming meeting on September 23-24 in Norfolk, Virginia. FSF represents the significant majority of the full-time limited access permit holders in the Atlantic scallop fishery. Our members are home-ported along the Atlantic coast from North Carolina and Virginia north through New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

Throughout the past several years, FSF has engaged extensively in the planning process for offshore energy and other ocean projects in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, which has given us unique insight into the deficiencies of current permitting and environmental review processes. We have learned that there are many ways in which these processes can be improved to increase stakeholder consultation, reduce conflicts, and ultimately improve planning efficiency for multiple uses of our offshore resources. Some of these improvements are well within the purview of the RPB; that is, they are tangible steps the RPB could take and/or recommend that would greatly reduce future use conflicts within the existing management structure, and could be accomplished with minimal investment.

We commend the RPB for the substantial amount of work its staff and members have spent developing the draft documents for this meeting and its work on the ocean plan to date. FSF has sent previous letters to the RPB throughout its development of the ocean plan, which describe the conflicts and challenges we have encountered related to offshore planning. In light of those comments, this letter will only briefly summarize our foremost concerns and will instead focus on providing practical suggestions, within the role of the RPB, for improving management and consultation.

Robert LaBelle
September 22, 2015
Page Two

I. THE RPB AND ITS OCEAN PLAN SHOULD ENHANCE REGIONAL COMMUNICATION AND IMPROVE PUBLIC NOTICE AND CONSULTATION PROCESSES

Action agencies are required to consult with other user groups as a matter of law and policy.¹ However, such consultation often occurs too late or does not occur at all. We acknowledge it may be burdensome for an agency or a project developer to identify and address the concerns of every single user group that could conceivably have a conflict with a proposal. However, in the absence of agency-initiated consultation, any fisheries interests or, indeed, any person with any interest in offshore activities, that wish to provide input must monitor each agency's actions individually and either engage the agency ad hoc or participate in the environmental review process.

It would be nearly impossible for a stakeholder to track each and every offshore proposal that may affect his or her industry. From the outset, the Administrative Procedure Act requires any agency proposing to permit an offshore project, or to conduct environmental review on such a project, to publish notification in the Federal Register.² However, not all agencies do so. For example, the National Science Foundation ("NSF") recently permitted a Rutgers University-led survey offshore New Jersey that is using seismic airgun blasts to measure long-term changes in seabed sedimentation. Despite the seismic blasts following a 4900-km survey line in an area that is heavily commercially and recreationally fished during the busiest fishing months of the year, the only public notice of the project was an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") quietly posted on the NSF's website. Similarly, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management ("BOEM") has sought comment on permits for seismic surveying without issuing official Federal Register notices. Therefore, even simply monitoring the Federal Register would not be an effective way to stay informed.

The environmental review process provides another legally-mandated opportunity for public notice and comment. While all federal projects are subject to environmental review,³ including public participation, the action agencies responsible for each project have differing approaches to conducting such review. Often the public, including affected stakeholders, is unaware of proposals and developments until far too late in the process to make meaningful engagement or planning efforts, if it is even possible at all. For example, under the "Smart from the Start" initiative for offshore wind farm permitting, BOEM only issues a Call for Information

¹ We have described this legal requirement in previous letters and, for the sake of brevity, incorporate those letters by reference.

² 5 U.S.C. § 553(b).

³ 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C).

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from the public *after* energy companies spend substantial time and money resources developing specific bids for a Wind Energy Area. The result of these policies is that agencies, in effect, enable private companies to lay claim to valuable ocean areas without any coherently structured process, as though the Mid-Atlantic ocean is a vast empty space waiting to be claimed. In New York, for example, three private companies have spent what likely amounts to millions of dollars so far to develop a proposal for an offshore wind facility, and the agency has spent significant resources on its review. Only after the Call for Information did the agency and the corporations learn that the proposed area overlaps prime scallop and other commercial fishery grounds, recreational fishing areas, a proposed liquefied natural gas (“LNG”) terminal, and shipping lanes. This system benefits nobody. The timing of input matters. As we have urged in previous letters to the RPB and many of the action agencies, it is absolutely critical to improve public outreach *before* projects are so far along in the planning phase that they are effectively irrevocable, or revocable only if substantial resources are wasted. Existing uses of an area must be considered in the earliest possible stages of planning decisions. We therefore urge the RPB to develop effective protocols and agreements that ensure reasonable protections for historic fishing grounds and other existing ocean uses in accordance with the law.

In the case of fisheries uses, environmental review typically occurs only during the essential fish habitat (“EFH”) consultation—which is almost always one of the last steps in the preparation of an environmental impact statement. The EFH consultation process is not sufficient as a stand-alone option for action agencies to consider fishing activity in a proposed project area, although it is certainly useful and should be observed and improved. Therefore FSF urges the RPB, at a minimum, to fully consider the following actions in its ocean plan:

1. *Adopt the draft recommendations of the Interjurisdictional Working Group related to fisheries uses.* In particular, the RPB should work with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s (“MAFMC”) Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee as the appropriate group to represent fisheries stakeholders. Increased dialogue between NOAA and state entities will also improve communication and decision making.
2. *Explore ways to improve the quality of EFH consultations completed by action agencies.* When action agencies prepare EFH consultations they are often factually inaccurate or missing information. Due to the complexity of fisheries management and science, it is difficult for other agencies to accurately characterize a region’s fisheries and fishery resources. As a result, NMFS and action agencies should develop formalized plans, including sharing staff expertise, to improve the quality of such consultations.
3. *Encourage interagency agreements on early consultation.* Clear standards for early consultation will minimize costs and complications associated with user group conflicts.

Robert LaBelle
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Page Four

Such agreements should also identify appropriate personnel within each agency to serve as the primary reference points for information on each potential use of an area.

4. *Work with the National Marine Fisheries Service (“NMFS”) to improve the EFH consultation guidance.* This guidance has not been updated since 2004 and is sorely outdated in light of the rapidly accelerating pace of offshore activities. The Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires NMFS to make recommendations to any federal or state agency considering an activity that, in the view of the relevant fishery management council, is likely to substantially affect fish habitat, including EFH, but does not provide any framework for doing so.⁴ NMFS guidance must be revised to require earlier consultation and describe consequences of action agency non-compliance with EFH recommendations.
5. *Create a centralized registry or database describing all projects under consideration regionally.* This simple mechanism would allow interested parties to monitor developments and directly engage with agencies or project representatives in order to streamline the resolution of potential
6. *Clarify each action agency’s environmental review process in one easily accessible document.* Promote agency commitment to utilize the Federal Register and follow standard practices for public input.

II. THE OCEAN PLAN SHOULD IMPROVE REGIONAL DATA SHARING

The quality of information is critical to an effective environmental review. However, action agencies have published EISs that have major flaws, perhaps due to the deep complexities in the management of offshore resources. We have seen this problem in a wide variety of reviews. While we cannot know what leads to the omission of key fishery information from environmental reviews, we do know that such omissions should be discovered and rectified prior to the development of site plans and spending of massive agency and private resources on permitting procedures.

The RPB is currently engaged in efforts to characterize ocean uses in the Northeast and to build tools to compile relevant biological and economic data. While we are hopeful that the characterization efforts will reduce the likelihood of these mistakes in the future, there are fundamental problems with their effectiveness. For the scallop fishery, for instance, annual assessments of the resource inform management decisions. The success of rotational management, which has led the Atlantic scallop fishery to become fully sustainable and the most lucrative in the

⁴ 16 U.S.C. § 1855(b)(3).

Robert LaBelle
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Page Five

nation, is dependent upon the flexibility to determine what areas to open to fishing each year in response to those assessments. Furthermore, “snapshots” of historical uses cannot describe the fishery’s actual footprint, as fishing grounds must shift from year to year. Due to these difficulties with the characterization process, additional backstop measures must be implemented to ensure that agency reviews are complete and fully informed.

One major problem relevant to regional data sharing lies in assessing the cumulative impacts of a series of permits for offshore anthropogenic activities. FSF is extraordinarily alarmed at a statement NMFS representatives made at an MAFMC Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel meeting over the summer. The agency stated that it cannot calculate such cumulative impacts, even of multiple small projects in a certain area.

The assessment of cumulative impacts to the human and natural environment is a mandated component of an environmental review analysis.⁵ While we do not believe that it is the RPB’s role to conduct complex scientific analysis related to specific user groups, its data sharing activities must ensure that all the information necessary to conduct cumulative effects analyses is available to action agencies.

FSF recommends the following actions related to data improvement:

1. *Adopt the proposed Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions related to wind energy, and also apply those actions to other activities and agencies.* Specifically, agencies should develop “guidance that addresses how data will be used in management, environmental, and regulatory reviews” and “agree on what data is sufficient for responsible entities to use for their reviews.”
2. *Identify appropriate personnel within each agency (either pre-existing staff or in new coordinating positions) to serve as the primary reference point for information on each potential use of an area.*
3. *Determine what information is needed to assess cumulative impacts, and ensure that such information is available to the appropriate agencies.*
4. *Improve public consultation requirements as described above.* This will ensure that the best and most recent data is shared among agencies at the appropriate times.

⁵ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7.

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III. THE OCEAN PLAN SHOULD PROVIDE A MECHANISM FOR WEIGHING THE SEVERITY OF CONFLICTS AND DISAPPROVING OR RE-SITING A PROJECT IF IT POSES TOO GREAT A CONFLICT WITH EXISTING USES

The draft materials posted in advance of the RPB meeting, which will inform the drafting of the ocean plan, focus heavily on increasing understanding among user groups and action agencies. This goal is extremely important. However, there are other considerations that must also be addressed in the ocean plan in order for it to be an effective management tool.

Proposed construction and operational activities will change the benthic and pelagic environment. It is reasonably foreseeable that anthropogenic activities can cause direct disturbance of substrate, increased sedimentation in the water column, heat from construction and industrial operations, hazards to navigation, and the potential for pollution.

Although these activities threaten the sustainability of many fishery resources, we are most familiar with the risks to scallops, which serve as but one example of how impacts to a fishery can rapidly compound. Adult organisms are sessile, attaching to the seabed and filtering plankton from water as it moves past. As such, scallops can only survive in areas with firm sand, gravel, or cobble substrate and low levels of inorganic suspended particulates.⁶ Scallops will therefore disappear from areas in which the substrate is replaced with rocks and concrete and sedimentation clouds the water column. Construction activities will also modify the water column itself. Any foreign object at or near the seafloor will create turbulence and eddies, which can influence scallop spat settlement and affect the viability of scallop beds as a whole. Scallop larvae are planktonic, and thus are suspended in the water column during the early stage of their lives. Although planktonic scallops travel with currents, these larvae generally settle in similar places from year to year, as they mature into spat. “Spatfall (the settling of larval scallops to the bottom), and the period immediately following, is thought to be particularly important in the formation of scallop beds and in determining year class size.”⁷ There is no evidence of mass migrations by scallops after spatfall.⁸ The movements of sea scallops are usually localized, and random or current-assisted.⁹ Once aggregations of adults are formed, they remain essentially stationary.¹⁰ Changes to an existing scallop bed’s benthic environment and the currents and gyres that larval scallops rely

⁶ Deborah Hart & Antonie Chute, *Essential Fish Habitat Source Document: Sea Scallop, Placopecten magellanicus, Life History and Habitat Characteristics Second Edition*, NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-NE-189 (Sept. 2004), at 13.

⁷ *Id.* at 1-2 (internal citations omitted).

⁸ *Id.* at 2.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

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on to be transported to that bed, therefore, can pose significant risks to the scallop resource and fishery.

Moreover, environmental review processes impose no hard and fast criteria for weighing a proposed project's impact on existing users and the human and natural environment. It is reasonable to expect each agency will base its decision using its own institutional values; that is, the action agency will most likely view its own proposed project as a higher priority than those proposed by others, or than preexisting uses of ocean resources. Accordingly, in a situation where two agencies may be proposing projects in the exact same location, or where one agency proposes a project in the same location as an existing use managed by another agency, which agency should be the one to stand down? Or, more succinctly, how much conflict is too much to proceed?

There are, in fact, sources of law mandating that certain uses are protected. For example, BOEM has a legal obligation under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, as amended by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, to protect existing "reasonable uses," such as commercial fishing, and consider areas for fishing and navigational purposes, in issuing offshore leases.¹¹ That law further prescribes that "the character of the waters above the outer continental shelf as high seas and the right to navigation and fishing therein shall not be affected" by BOEM's leasing of OCS submerged lands.¹² Other sources of law also prioritize certain uses over others.

FSF proposed the following solution for weighing the relative impacts of proposed offshore projects:

1. *Review the existing legal framework surrounding offshore resources, and clarify on the record which uses are protected or afforded deference.*

IV. THE RPB AND THE OCEAN PLAN MUST PROTECT THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS IT HAS DEVELOPED THEREIN

As some of you may know, the Obama Administration recently proposed several areas off the coast of New England to be designated as national monuments under the Antiquities Act.¹³ Notably, this process is occurring not only in the absence of public input or stakeholder consultation; it is occurring without any environmental impacts analysis or scientific review.

¹¹ 43 U.S.C. §§ 1337(p)(4)(I), (J).

¹² *Id.* § 1332(2).

¹³ 16 U.S.C. § 431–433.

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FSF is extremely concerned about the possibility of a large-scale closure, which may be enacted unilaterally and the consideration of which is proceeding in complete opposition to the stakeholder-based collaborative processes that we have all cultivated so carefully in the arena of ocean management. Not only is this process undemocratic but it could have substantial unintended adverse impacts across New England. Such a closure, for example, could displace not only fishing effort but other activities that may be well suited in the area and compatible with its ecosystem—leading to changes in bycatch composition, region-wide habitat, and the economies of coastal communities.

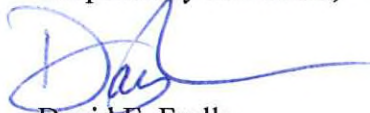
The RPB should likewise be extremely concerned about any unilaterally enacted ocean planning activities. We therefore recommend the following:

1. *The RPB should actively oppose any offshore activity, permit, or designation that does not follow the spirit and the letter of the ocean plan.*

* * * *

In summary, we urge the RPB to make tangible progress toward reducing conflicts over competing offshore resources by following the suggestions listed above. As we have stated before, early consultation on permitting and leasing decisions is critical. The RPB, while it lacks authority to amend the law or regulatory processes that prioritize existing resource users, is well-situated to drive adjustments such as these to ensure that activities are well-coordinated and that communication is effective. We appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments, and look forward to continuing to work with the RPB to develop solutions to offshore use conflicts.

Respectfully submitted,



David E. Frulla
Andrew E. Minkiewicz
Anne E. Hawkins

Counsel for Fisheries Survival Fund

From: **Robert LaBelle** <robert.labelle@boem.gov>
Date: Thu, Sep 24, 2015 at 3:47 PM
Subject: Re: Public comment to be distributed to Mid-RPB members
To: Bonnie Brady <greenfluke@optonline.net>
Cc: "midatlanticrpb@boem.gov" <midatlanticrpb@boem.gov>, Gregory Capobianco <Gregory.Capobianco@dos.ny.gov>, Michael Snyder <Michael.Snyder@dos.ny.gov>, Michael Luisi <MLUISI@dnr.state.md.us>, "kevin.chu@noaa.gov" <kevin.chu@noaa.gov>, "laura.mckay@deq.virginia.gov" <laura.mckay@deq.virginia.gov>, "icantral@merid.org" <icantral@merid.org>, "irigoyen@merid.org" <irigoyen@merid.org>

Bonnie,

Thank you for the in-depth comments and offer to share key data sets, as well as your participation in our meetings in Norfolk. I am asking our facilitators to forward your message to the full RPB member list and we will be working thru Mike Luisi to follow up.

Best,

Bob LaBelle

> On Sep 24, 2015, at 1:23 PM, Bonnie Brady <greenfluke@optonline.net> wrote:

>

> Hello,

>

> I was told yesterday I could electronically send public comment for today to you and you would distribute it to the various Mid-RPB members. If you could please do so, I realize the "live" public comment period is over for today, but if you could still send it to them now, it would be greatly appreciated.

>

> Thank you

> Bonnie Brady

> LICFA

> <Public Comment LICFA September 24 mid rpb.docx>

September 24, 2015

Members of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

Re: Public comment as it relates to

(4) Plan Implementation

(5) Science and research Plan

Dear Members;

I would like to offer the following suggestions to issues discussed re the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (Mid-RPB) Draft Ocean Action Plan (OAP) This is a follow-up on my public comments of yesterday, and the day before at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) public workshop. On both days, I tried to offer what I felt was necessary and focused criticism over gaps in the data and process, and I believe the following are necessary steps with which to make an effective Mid-RPB OAP product .

Since the Marine Life Data and Analysis Team (MDAT) program will be the primary technical support information resource for both MARCO and the Mid-RPB re technical support, "to insure the utility of the information for decision making,"¹ I feel that these steps must be addressed now.

As I discussed at the MDAT workshop discussion on Tuesday, without a more thorough review of the Northeast Fishery Science Center (NEFSC) trawl data, and augmentation with not only NEAMAP data, but pre-scrubbed (pre 2010) RV Albatross inshore sampling landings data (including Nantucket Shoals) that were removed to calibrate the RV Albatross with the RV Bigelow, I do not believe that the NEFSC trawl survey information will in any way be sufficient to show adequate areas of importance (richness, diversity or habitat) for fish in the MDAT model.

Augmentation of the data by the inclusion of the NEFSC cooperative research programs' e-VTR study fleet data should be added, along with vetting of the MDAT data by the NEFSC cooperative research program head John Hoey.

To create a more thorough stream of fisheries data information, the MDAT program should also enlist the aid of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (MAFMC) newly-created Trawl Advisory Panel (TAP) members, perhaps through a one-day workshop, to discuss the present fisheries data streams as they are captured and offer expert opinion re how to improve the level of information, along with information sharing re the nuts and bolts of trawl surveys and the modeling systems used. Both TAP and MDAT members could share input re trawl surveys and models used to capture data. Both teams together could work toward envisioning

¹ MARCO handout, "Scopes and Objectives for Information Synthesis to Support Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning."

future research projects and methods to capture fisheries data in a more thorough and comprehensive manner.

Regarding the Human Use Data Synthesis (HUDS) Project, using Vessel Trip Report (VTR) and Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) data I believe will yield woefully inadequate results. Some fisheries presently use AIS systems, I think it would behoove the HUDS project to meet with NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to discuss whether both NEFSC study fleet, and other AIS data can be added to the mix. I also believe that meeting with fishermen directly, perhaps at New England or Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meetings, or as part of a one-day workshop with the MAFMC's TAP could offer better information re where and when fishing exists and to what extent.

Also, I feel very strongly that there should be inclusion of the New York State Offshore Atlantic Ocean Study data, compiled by NYSDOS and the Marine Program of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, to the MDAT, HUDS and Regional Ocean Assessment (ROA) projects data streams. It is simply the most comprehensive "dataset of physical, biological, geographic and socioeconomic information available for the Atlantic Ocean waters offshore of New York State,"² and took two years to complete. I believe it is the gold-standard for which MARCO and the Mid-RPB should strive to achieve in their MDAT, HUDS and ROA projects.

Without the inclusion of commercial fishermen in this process, and frankly, more preferably, at the table during all steps of this process, the Mid-RPB and MARCO groups are not availing themselves of fishermen's professional expertise and knowledge that could make the final project only better, more thorough and more accepted by those who make the ocean their workplace.

If the goal of the Mid-RPB is to truly create a pathway through the regulatory process for more informed decision making about our future ocean uses, then commercial fishermen and the fishing communities that depend on them, deserve effective and broad-based representation and input at every step in this process. Purely engaging with stakeholders, while not doing anything they suggest to improve the final product is frankly disingenuous, and the fishing communities of the Mid-Atlantic deserve better from their Mid-RPB and MARCO representatives.

Thank you,

Bonnie Brady
Executive Director , Long Island Commercial Fishing Association

2

http://docs.dos.ny.gov/communitieswaterfronts/ocean_docs/NYSDOS_Offshore_Atlantic_Ocean_Study.pdf

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Tue, Sep 29, 2015 at 3:19 PM
Subject: Re: Public Comments solicited at White Marlin Open
To: Kate Morrison - MARCO <kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org>
Cc: BOEM MidAtlanticRPB <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>, Jeff Deem <deemjeff@erols.com>, Laura McKay <laura.mckay@deg.virginia.gov>, Arlo Hemphill <ahemphill@midatlanticocean.org>, Kaity Goldsmith - MARCO <kgoldsmith@midatlanticocean.org>, Michelle Lennox - MARCO <mlelnox@midatlanticocean.org>

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

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

On Tue, Sep 29, 2015 at 2:47 PM, Kate Morrison - MARCO <kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org>wrote:
Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body,

Please find attached, a comment letter regarding public input solicited at the White Marlin Open.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment. Please disregard the previous submission and replace with the attached.

Sincerely,

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

On Mon, Sep 21, 2015 at 10:15 AM, Kate Morrison - MARCO <kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org>wrote:
Dear Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body,

Please find attached, a comment letter with two appendices as a single PDF document regarding public comments solicited at the White Marlin Open.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

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



September 18, 2015

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Co-Leads:

Mr. Robert LaBelle
Senior Advisor to the Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
11969
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

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

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

Submitted electronically

Re: Public Comments solicited at White Marlin Open

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

This letter is to inform you of Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) outreach efforts related to regional ocean planning and targeted to the recreational fishing community and other attendees at the White Marlin Open in Ocean City, Maryland. Recreational fishermen include professional and amateur enthusiasts and span a broad diversity of people, making it difficult to categorize or approach them as a single community. The White Marlin Open is a significant event for the recreational fishing community that draws local media and community-wide attention, and can serve as a model for future outreach by MARCO at similar types of signature fishing events around the region.

Mr. Jeff Deem, a recreational fisherman and member of MARCO's Stakeholder Liaison Committee (SLC), spoke with other fishermen about the regional ocean planning process and opportunities to become involved. Mr. Deem has also drafted an open letter (Appendix I) to the recreational fishing community that was published as a full-page advertisement in the regional publication *Coastal Fisherman*.



MARCO hosted an exhibit at the event that included general regional ocean planning information, copies of Mr. Deem's letter, and comment cards. The comment cards were available for event participants, attendees, and members of the public to provide their sentiments to the RPB regarding the following questions:

1. What about the Mid-Atlantic Ocean matters most to you?
2. What should the Ocean Action Plan consider in regards to supporting how and where you use the ocean?

A PDF file of the scanned comment cards is attached in Appendix II.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and provide this information to the RPB process.

Sincerely,

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

OPEN LETTER TO RECREATIONAL ANGLERS ON OCEAN PLANNING

The Mid-Atlantic region is building its first **Ocean Action Plan** targeted for completion by the end of 2016. Recreational fishing is an important part of this ocean planning. Recreational angler Jeff Deem represents recreational fishing interests on a regional stakeholder advisory group and explains below why your help is needed to shape this Plan for our region.

Dear Recreational Angler,

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN SEASCAPE IS ABOUT TO CHANGE.

There are changes coming to the Mid-Atlantic and in order to address those changes there is an increased focus on 'Ocean Planning' in the region. Ocean Planning brings together the various ocean user groups to coordinate ocean uses and minimize conflicts. Our goal is to make you aware of the changes that may be coming to your fishing grounds and ask for your suggestions on ways we can protect your interest while accommodating these changes.

You have probably heard about the pending installations of wind turbines off our coast. There are also plans for seismic testing that may lead to oil and gas platforms, sand and mineral mining, natural gas export terminals, changes in shipping channels to handle the larger ships coming through the enlarged Panama Canal and possibly other interests. As these are added to current uses such as recreational and commercial fishing, shipping, national defense, ocean research, pleasure boating, undersea cable routes, etc., you might see the need for a coordinated effort to get every group to work together.

In order for the recreational fishing community to be taken seriously in the planning process, we need to speak up now and not wait until after the decisions are made. So far, it looks like many of the proposed projects will be beneficial for recreational fishing, providing new structure and habitat. It appears that we will have the ability to fish around the new structures as is allowed in the Gulf. This certainly has the potential to be a win for the recreational fishing community. In years to come, as particular areas are proposed for new uses, we will need to know if you fish in these areas, what types of gear or methods you use within the areas or if you transit through them on the way to your fishing grounds. This information can aid in determining the placement of the structures, their layout and in selecting the least intrusive structure types. In the meantime, we would like to hear what areas are important to you, your concerns about these changes and how they might affect your fishing efforts.



Sincerely,

Jeff Deem

Jeff Deem

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

HOW TO PARTICIPATE AND MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Recreational anglers are invited to participate in the Mid-Atlantic ocean planning process. Regular public meetings & webinars are listed at: midatlanticocean.org/YourOceanPlan

Questions and public comment are welcome anytime by writing to info@midatlanticocean.org or:

Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO)
Attn: Michelle Lennox
580 Taylor Avenue, E-2
Annapolis, MD 21401

For further information, recreational fishers are also encouraged to reach out to their fellow anglers on MARCO's Stakeholder Liaison Committee for Mid-Atlantic ocean planning:

Mr. Jeff Deem: deemjeff@erols.com, (703) 550-9245
Captain John McMurray: johnmcmurray@optonline.net, (718) 791-2094

MARCO, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean, is a partnership of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia to address four shared regional priorities: climate change adaptation, support the development of renewable energy, protection of important marine habitats and promoting improvements in ocean water quality. MARCO provides a collective voice to improve ocean health and contribute to the high quality of life and economic vitality of the region. The Governors of the five coastal Mid-Atlantic states established MARCO in 2009.

MARCO's Stakeholder Liaison Committee (SLC) is an informal working group based upon MARCO's four shared priorities. It is designed to strengthen MARCO's communication network and foster meaningful and ongoing stakeholder involvement in the Mid-Atlantic's regional ocean planning process. The SLC is composed of recognized leaders in representative ocean stakeholder sectors, including both recreational and commercial fishing.

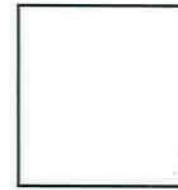
MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

5 STATES 4 PRIORITIES 1 OCEAN

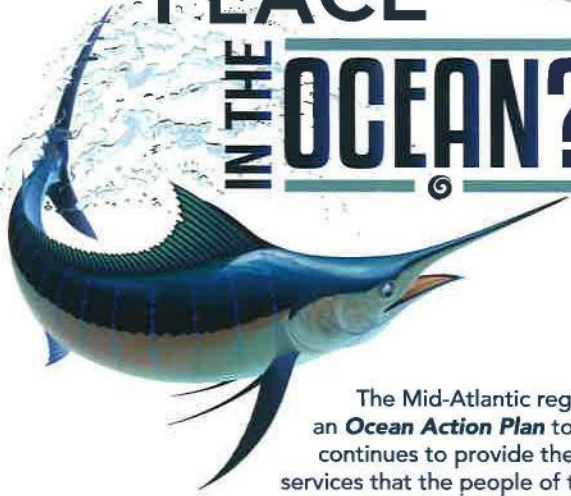
Enhancing the vitality of the region's ocean ecosystem and economy

Learn More at: midatlanticocean.org





WHAT'S YOUR PLACE IN THE OCEAN?



The Mid-Atlantic region is building an **Ocean Action Plan** to ensure our ocean continues to provide the many goods and services that the people of the Mid-Atlantic want and need into the future. Help us shape this plan by sharing what about our ocean matters most to you.

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN (MARCO)
580 TAYLOR AVENUE
E-2 TAWES STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401

MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

5 STATES 4 PRIORITIES 1 OCEAN
Enhancing the vitality of the region's ocean ecosystem and economy

We all have a place in the ocean. Whether you fish, surf, create energy, defend our nation, ship goods or simply enjoy beautiful waterfront views, the ocean is an important part of your life. Regional ocean planning is a way to protect the special places and activities in the ocean that matter most to you.

The Mid-Atlantic region is building its first Ocean Action Plan targeted for completion by the end of 2016. We're seeking your help to shape this Plan for our region. **Your voice and your place in the ocean are the most important parts of this plan.**



LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

littering especially the balloons. Offshore fish often and see countless balloons

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

increased focus on marine debris

NAME: *Ashley Allen*



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST TO RECEIVE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN PLANNING

NOTE: Comments on this card will be submitted as Public Comment to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. You can also share your thoughts and questions by writing to: info@midatlanticocean.org

VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH



We all have a place in the ocean. Whether you fish, surf, create energy, defend our nation, ship goods or simply enjoy beautiful waterfront views, the ocean is an important part of your life. Regional ocean planning is a way to protect the special places and activities in the ocean that matter most to you.

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Beach preservation, surf quality
open fishing area - local, recreational & deep sea. Preservation

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

of the pristine natural horizon

NAME: Peggy Stinemire BUSINESS SECTOR



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST TO RECEIVE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN PLANNING

NOTE: Comments on this card will be submitted as Public Comment to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. You can also share your thoughts and questions by writing to: info@midatlanticocean.org

VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH

MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

We all have a place in the ocean. Whether you fish, surf, create energy, defend our nation, ship goods or simply enjoy beautiful waterfront views, the ocean is an important part of your life. Regional ocean planning is a way to protect the special places and activities in the ocean that matter most to you.

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Waves for surfing, fishing

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

I'm a surfer in Fenwick Island, DE and I wish the waves were better. The waves are unsurfable and the sand needs to be managed

NAME: Taylor



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

NOTE: Comments on this card will be submitted as Public Comment to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. You can also share your thoughts and questions by writing to: info@midatlanticocean.org

VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH



We all have a place in the ocean. Whether you fish, surf, create energy, defend our nation, ship goods or simply enjoy beautiful waterfront views, the ocean is an important part of your life. Regional ocean planning is a way to protect the special places and activities in the ocean that matter most to you.

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Food and recreation

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Support legislation that regulates farm waste (chickens)
conservation of ocean animals & sea life

Ferrell
NAME: Santacruz



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

NOTE: Comments on this card will be submitted as Public Comment to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. You can also share your thoughts and questions by writing to: info@midatlanticocean.org

VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH



We all have a place in the ocean. Whether you fish, surf, create energy, defend our nation, ship goods or simply enjoy beautiful waterfront views, the ocean is an important part of your life. Regional ocean planning is a way to protect the special places and activities in the ocean that matter most to you.

The Mid-Atlantic region is building its first Ocean Action Plan targeted for completion by the end of 2016. We're seeking your help to shape this Plan for our region. **Your voice and your place in the ocean are the most important parts of this plan.**



LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Fishing -

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

LIMIT COMMERCIAL FISHING LIMITS

NAME:

BRIAN STEVENS



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST TO RECEIVE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE ATLANTIC OCEAN PLANNING

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VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH

MARCO

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

We all have a place in the ocean. Whether you fish, surf, create energy, defend our nation, ship goods or simply enjoy beautiful waterfront views, the ocean is an important part of your life. Regional ocean planning is a way to protect the special places and activities in the ocean that matter most to you.

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LET US KNOW:

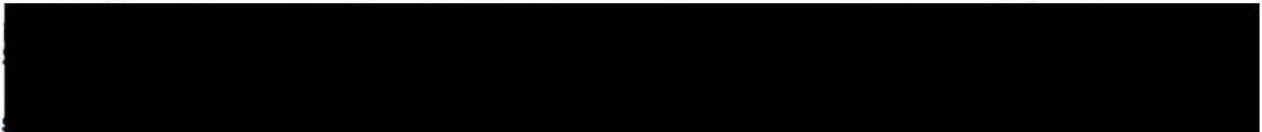
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean water, clean air, clean beaches

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Ocean City depends upon the ocean and beaches. The economy of the state is dependent upon Ocean city during the summer months

NAME: *Paul WockenFuss*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

We enjoy the ocean + want to keep it clean + healthy

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

We have a family business that depends on tourism + we need to keep the ocean clean

NAME: Lynn Wocken



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean water, clean beaches, the ocean habitat, natural resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Keeping the water clean, fish management.

NAME: Katie Chado



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

conservation !!

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

no offshore drilling

NAME:

Bece E.



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

I love to fish -

Water near are losing Mooring because it's shallow

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Pollution -

Tugs - N - Reefs

NAME: Trish Walker



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CLEAN BEACHES, AM AVID SWIMMER, CLEAN WATER,

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

IF PLACING "WIND MILLS". NO PROBLEM WITH ME, I AM SURE IT WOULD BE WAY OFFSHORE.

NAME: SANDRA ROBINSON

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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

How clean the water is

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

No wind mills / turbines

NAME: *Paul Price*



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BEACH - CLEANLINESS

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

CLEANLINESS

NAME: SUE CARPENTER



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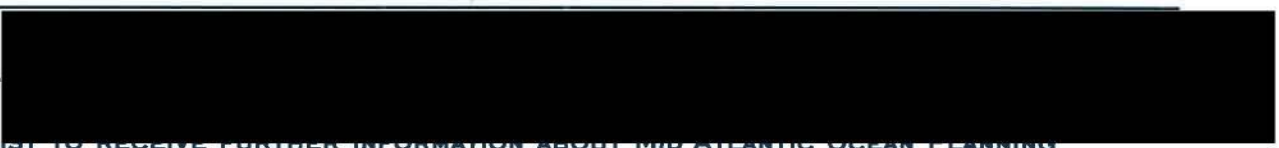
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Beach
Fishing.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Clean water
Beach Front business..... need clean water

NAME: Christy Aaker



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

WIND TURBINES, FISHERIES, FISH FARMING,
SEAWEEDS FOR CONSUMPTION GARDENING

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

NOT OIL + GAS

NAME: _____



EMAIL: _____

STEVE PALMISTO



ADD ME TO THE M... ATLANTIC OCEAN PLANNING

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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean water
plentiful fish

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Control energy platforms - oil/wind - construction

NAME: *Doug Cook*

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean, healthy + navigable waters drive tourism, benefitting my family business + those of my neighbors.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Protect the resource first. Invest in offshore wind energy + keep it accessible to recreational fishermen. Protect canyons + corals - more coral, more fish.

NAME: Greg Butler
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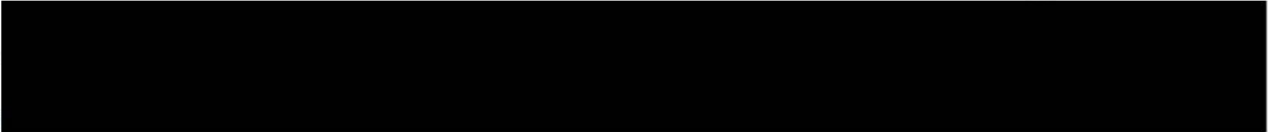
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean water | Chill waves

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Clean waters!

NAME: Sam Karas



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean beaches, clean water, low crime, well kept Boardwalks

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

The Mid-Atlantic provides a place for my family to come together on vacation every summer after a long year's work. Est. 1977 4 (generations) strong ♡

NAME: Christina Gonzalez

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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean ocean water, low crime, and the crabs

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Have family in both OC and VA beach area, it's important that the beaches stay clean to ensure they live in a clean, safe environment.

NAME: Tracy

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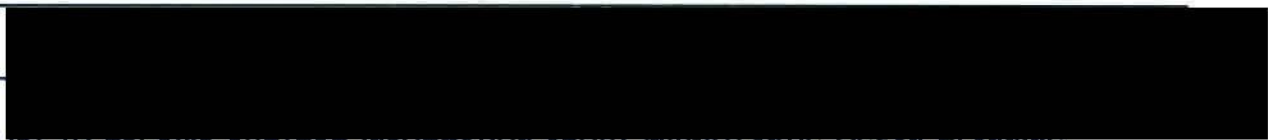
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Cape Henlopen State Park, wildlife preservation

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Sustain the wildlife in protected habitats

NAME: *ADENA VAN BUSKIRK*



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

I own a business on the boardwalk
so I need clean beaches to attract
tourists.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

NAME: Janice Motter

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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

I own a business on the Ocean City boardwalk and maintaining a clean and safe ocean is crucial to my livelihood.

NAME: *Jen Waters*



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Preserve the natural habitat, clean beaches, preserve the sand, birds, wildlife.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Clean beaches clean waters

MARLAN WACKENFUS
NAME: _____

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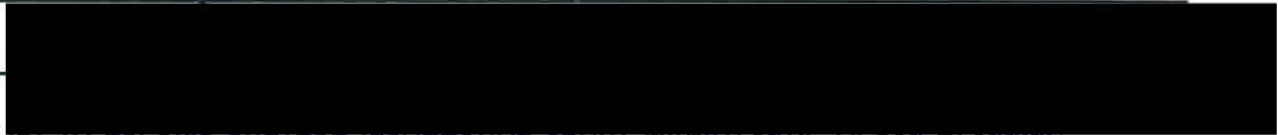
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean beaches, preserve wildlife refuge parks, observe wildlife in natural habitats.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Preserve wildlife in habitats, clean waters and tributaries.

NAME: *Penise Storey*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

protection and proliferation of edible fish species
(Drop wrecks and steel construction for habitat?)
Promote expansion of crabs, lobsters, clams, mussels

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Absolutely no dumping. I am for energy development
but want a 70 year moratorium on off-shore
drilling. Exploratory wells only!

Larry Hemphill
NAME: Larry Hemphill

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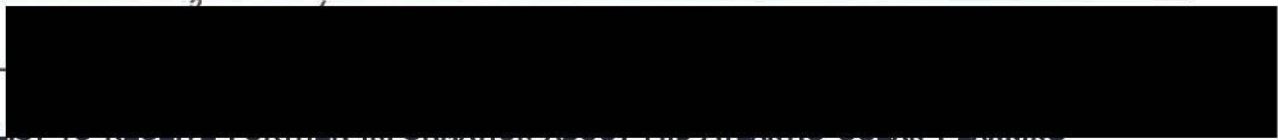
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

I love laying on the beach, there is nothing like a clean, pristine beach with beautiful crashing waves

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Clean water = clean beach. Please protect the ocean wildlife, we need a balanced ecosystem.

NAME: *Sarah Turner*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

My employment ☺

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

The cleanliness of the ocean is critical for my business's success.

NAME:

Jesse Thompson

BUS
SEC

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VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH

MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

- #1 KEEPING clean enough for the wildlife (preserving)
- #2 Keeping it beautiful for family trips to come
- #3 Regulating what we can take, and keeping trash out.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Consider that the Oceans are for everyone, nobody owns them and so do your part to protect as best as you can without nonsensical regulations. It's meant to be beautiful and explored.

NAME: Jimmy O'Neal [REDACTED]

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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Keeping it clean for economic, social, and ecological use

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Education on keeping beaches clean and the impact it has on ocean water

NAME: *Lisa Condon*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Virginia contemplating offshore drilling. NO!

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Invasive Species, offshore drilling, ocean acidification and overfishing!
sea level rise due to global warming and shoreline erosion, living shorelines > hardened shorelines

NAME: *Tara Wyman*



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

That the fish and shellfish are able to continue to thrive. Remaining untainted and viable.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

The depth to

NAME: *Kelly Whitmore* [Redacted]

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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Do NOT Let it get cluttered
with Turbines

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Protect our Fishery by implementing
Catch regulations

NAME:

Bill Schweitzer



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

protecting beaches from erosion and keeping both our beaches and waters clean.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

I frequently swim in Ocean City and my job depends on OC's tourism. Clean and safe conditions ensure tourists will keep coming back.

NAME: *Chris Butler*

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

The beautiful beaches along the mid atlantic coast. Wonderful seafood catches.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Protect the ocean ecology so we continue to have our fantastic seafood

NAME: Jan Schorch

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

I like all of the oceanic wildlife and how clean the water and beaches have been.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

I regularly swim and visit this ocean (Ocean City & Assateague Island) and appreciate them being clean and well maintained.

NAME: Cori Ware



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Cleanliness

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Cleanliness

NAME: *J Keagle*



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

The fishing and Contest so much fun!
family activities.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Keeping the wildlife safe

NAME: Dana Gonzalez

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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Keeping clean and fish sustainability

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

More artificial Reefs

NAME: *Nate Roberts*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Everything! Our kids our future!!

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Testing, Fundraising + Awareness in schools

NAME: *Kim Bould*

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

The natural history of it stays preserved as long as possible.

Too many natural reefs are endangered as a result of proposed construction and trawling.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

The livelihood of the reefs we fish on, on a daily basis. Consider the bottom structure where they are proposing wind farms and tighter commercial regs. near wrecks.

NAME: Chris Clasing

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

BAY GRASSES, CLEANING UP OF TRIBUTARY

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

QUIT POLLUTING + CLEAN UP OLD POLLUTERS

NAME:

JOHN BEEMAN



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Sharks

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

No trash in the ocean.

NAME:

Queen Talbotton



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

WILD LIFE , proximity to multiple
estuaries ,

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Control of commercial fisheries,
Keep preserving recreational fishing
& wild life

NAME: Emily Giebel [REDACTED]

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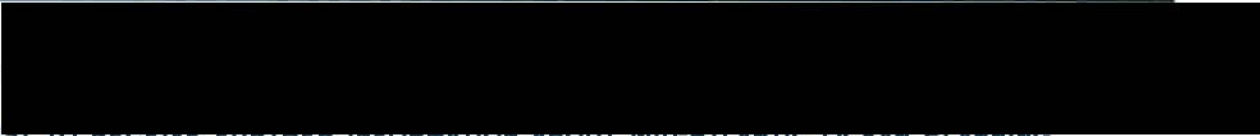
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Cleanlineot

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Building to close to ocean/Bays

NAME: *Paula*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

The wildlife and sustainability and sea kelp

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

less pollution and more environmental sustainability law

NAME: *Ryan*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

keeping our oceans clean so wild life can thrive and so we can promote healthy recreational watersports & fishing.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Stricter reinforcement in regards to monitoring & fining.

NAME: Francesca Knight BU SE

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O/C it's my home. Keeping the ocean animals clean & safe matters.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Keeping it clean & promoting via social media for ~~economic~~ economic purposes. to keep people coming to America's Best Beach.

NAME: Yehim Karaman



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

I want it clean and safe for my daughter.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Keep it clean and safe and keep the beaches clean and wide

NAME: *Sheryl Lorch*



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WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Getting a healthy tan next to clean water.

Not getting eaten by SHARKS!

Eating big FAT Healthy Blue Crabs and other Seafood!

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

I go to the beach OC Md. I want them to be clean and healthy. Energy Development off our coasts needs to be very regulated to insure no impact to my awesome

NAME: Donna Ware

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→ beach day

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Natural Resources

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

fish management

NAME: *Nicole*



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The Mid-Atlantic region is building its first Ocean Action Plan targeted for completion by the end of 2016. We're seeking your help to shape this Plan for our region. **Your voice and your place in the ocean are the most important parts of this plan.**



LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Water Quality, Clean beaches, Strength of Oyster, clam, and crab
Production

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Both my family business and current employer rely on Tourism and the
Cleanliness of the beaches.

NAME: Greg Butler



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST TO RECEIVE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE ATLANTIC OCEAN PLANNING

NOTE: Comments on this card will be submitted as Public Comment to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. You can also share your thoughts and questions by writing to: info@midatlanticocean.org

VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH



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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

~~That it is clear and accessible for everyone~~
That it remains clear and accessible for everyone
outgoing and good fishing.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Moderate fishing, pollution, and various commercial fishing to accommodate these activities

NAME: Chris Palmer



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST TO RECEIVE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN PLANNING

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LET US KNOW:

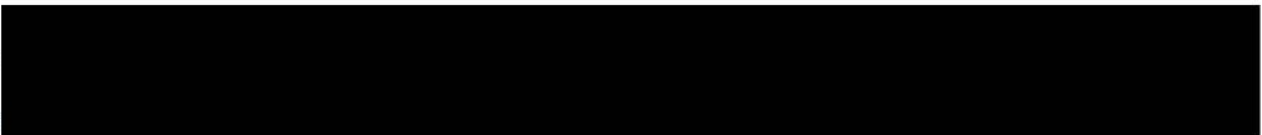
WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Preserving + Supporting our aquatic wildlife with mindful harvesting of commercial + sport fishermen.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Natural habitats + proliferation of aquatic life to maintain balance between nature + needs.

NAME: Alexandra Gothier



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean beaches, water quality, marine wild life conservation & keeping protected areas protected. Commercial fishermen should be regulated more.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Ocean Action Plan should consider a vigorous fight against offshore oil & a vigorous drive to achieve offshore wind farms &/or wave energy. Most importantly, Plan should encourage conservation & preservation. No blue, No green.

NAME: Patrick Blake

ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

SEA LIFE PRESERVATION — CREATURES SUCH AS ROCKFISH,
BLUE CRABS, OYSTERS, CLAMS, etc... Keeping Ocean clean
and free from pollution.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

→ NO OFF SHORE DRILLING
→ SUPPORTING CASUAL TOURISM
→ BEACH REPLENISHMENT EFFORTS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED AT CAREFULLY

NAME:

Retham D'Antonio

ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

blue fin tuna + crabs

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

restrictions on above

NAME: Smith



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Letting Female Crabs loose when caught.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

We should put windmills off shore.
Build more artificial reefs.

NAME: Carlo DiFilippo

ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Marine life sustainability
improving water quality

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

establishing a symbiotic relationship w/
watermen and sports fishing community to
better enhance all interests

NAME: Sheila Stevens

ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

THE PRESERVATION OF THE OCEAN CREATURES SUCH AS:

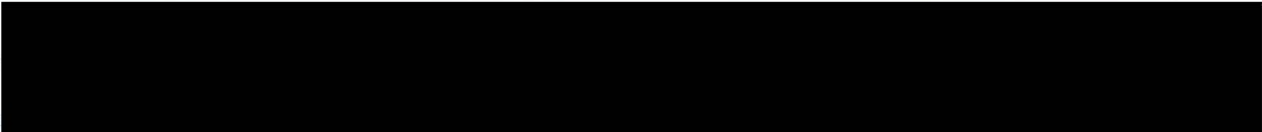
ROCKFISH, OYSTERS, CRABS, ETC... Keeping the ocean healthy / free of pollution.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

USING THE OCEAN RESPECTFULLY - "NO OFF SHORE DRILLING" -

AND SUPPORTING COASTAL TOURISM.

NAME: Anthony D'Antonio



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Thriving resources, keeping our beaches and oceans clean,
Sustaining the seafood industry for our watermen.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

When populations decrease, there should be restrictions on fishing,
Crabbing, etc.
Stiff penalties for littering our oceans, bays, etc.

NAME: Lauren McGinnis

ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

That there is too much pollution. People treat the ocean like a big trash can.

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Work on putting more sanctions on businesses who dump waste into our waterways.

NAME: CATHY SHRIVER



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Polution from our waste mgmt.
Over fishing. Please ban long liners.
Have all countries agree to fish harvest

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

Cut backs to restore populations. - Stop
Aerial Observation of & capture of the
Menhaden stocks

NAME: Chris Rose BUSH SECT [Redacted]

ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST TO [Redacted]

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LET US KNOW:

WHAT ABOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Clean surf and beaches ; sustainable fishery

WHAT SHOULD THE OCEAN ACTION PLAN CONSIDER IN REGARDS TO SUPPORTING HOW & WHERE YOU USE THE OCEAN?

** regulation of offshore commercial fishing - but realizing people need to make a living*

NAME: *D. Walker*



ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST

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VISIT: WWW.MIDATLANTICOCEAN.ORG/YOUROCEANPLAN/RECFISH

MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 12:31 PM
Subject: Re: Recommendations from the September Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Meeting
To: "Chase, Alison" <achase@nrdc.org>
Cc: "Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov" <Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov>, "Gwynne Schultz -DNR- (gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov)" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org" <KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thank you for sending us these recommendations from the MidA RPB meeting in September. We will forward your letter to the members of the MidA RPB for consideration as we discuss our next steps. In addition, we will post your letter to the written public comments section on the Mid-A RPB webpage.

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

On Mon, Oct 19, 2015 at 12:48 PM, Chase, Alison <achase@nrdc.org> wrote:

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

Sincerely,

Ali Chase

**American Littoral Society • Maryland Academy of Sciences at The Maryland Science Center •
Moms Clean Air Force Virginia • Natural Resources Defense Council •
Surfrider Foundation • Wild Oceans • Wildlife Conservation Society**

October 19, 2015

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Co-Leads:

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

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

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

Submitted electronically

Re: Recommendations from the September Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Meeting

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

Thank you, and the other members of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB), for your continued work to develop a meaningful Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP or Plan) and your active participation at the recent Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) Mid-Atlantic Ocean Planning Stakeholder Workshop (Workshop) and RPB meeting.¹ Many of our organizations were able to attend and, in particular, we appreciated the open dialogue with the contractors at the Workshop and the chance to discuss with many of you both the upcoming Plan contents and the RPB's future.

The below recommendations mirror many of the public comments given; we hope to reiterate their importance and share additional thoughts as to how these goals can be attained in a tight timeframe. We will be providing further recommendations, especially concerning identification of Mid-Atlantic ocean health indicators, ecologically rich areas and additional interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) actions, after seeing the Plan actions under consideration at the Northeast Regional Planning Body's October 20th Stakeholder Forum.

¹ Materials *available at*: <http://www.boem.gov/MidA-RPB-Meetings/>.

I. We urge you to hold a public workshop in January, 2016 to showcase the consultants' final work products and discuss how this work will advise the Plan's IJC actions.

We are impressed by the depth of work that the MARCO contractors have accomplished since the July webinar and believe an early January in-person workshop – similar in structure to this past September 22 one – would be the perfect opportunity to show off the final December products and focus us all on how best to incorporate this new information into the Plan over the next nine months. As we have noted previously, the ecological and human use data products are not end results in and of themselves. The Plan should identify actions, including performance standards and mitigation measures, to avoid and minimize the impacts to ecologically important areas and to support sustainable uses. The Plan should include guidance to protect our ocean ecosystem and encourage sustainable use.

We hope the January workshop would not only explain the final tools and acknowledge prudent next steps to advance the existing work, but will allocate time for discussion of how agencies can incorporate new measures to eliminate or mitigate risks from industrial uses to our ocean ecosystem – especially in areas that have been identified as ecologically rich areas (ERAs) and ecological marine units (EMUs). Agencies should also begin to share publicly the specific steps they are willing to take to better address and resolve siting conflicts between uses (*e.g.*, existing fishing and shipping activities and proposed wind farms, and proposed energy uses for the same space, like liquid natural gas and wind development). We want to help you flesh out the concrete ways that this process is improving how we conduct ocean business.

To prepare for the workshop, we encourage you to take immediate steps to prioritize a means by which the new ecological and human use data synthesis tools can be superimposed on each other in some fashion in order for decision-makers, stakeholders, and the public to gain a better understanding of possible conflicts between ERAs, EMUs, region-wide ocean features like migration routes and existing and planned for human uses. As you well know, multiple uses and/or important ecological resources appearing in the same area does not necessarily translate into a conflict that needs to be addressed to improve the ocean's health and sustainable use. As such, we value the contractors' efforts to detail how robust the data are and the work being done as part of the Regional Ocean Assessment (ROA) team to identify threats that may be posed by particular industrial uses. We urge you to acknowledge in these final products – to the extent possible – the location of activities and threats within the water column and at what point of the year to allow for greater specificity in regulatory action.

II. From January through March, 2016, the RPB should flesh out guidance for how agencies will reduce or eliminate risk of degradation for each of the Plan's ERAs, EMUs, and region-wide features.

RPB identification and protection of ERAs, EMUs, and region-wide features is at the heart of this Plan's value. Certain areas, whether as a result of their structure or habitat, simply have an oversized influence on the ecosystem's functioning, and some resources are so rare and/or vulnerable that steps need to be taken to reduce risk for the benefit of future generations. The ecological data synthesis work begun by the Marine Life Data and Analysis Team (MDAT) represents a state of the art effort, one which will grow stronger with each successive pass and adding of new data. Acknowledging that we have more to learn does not mean that we can wait to take steps now to secure our oceans' resiliency against a rapidly changing climate and increased ocean activity.

We urge the Healthy Ocean Ecosystems champions to continue the work noted in their IJC actions to “[i]dentify and recommend to appropriate agency(ies) actions to reduce or eliminate risk of degradation for each ERA”², as well as for region-wide features like migration corridors and the EMUs. We strongly recommend that the RPB add a placeholder into IJC actions to recognize this important work: “The RPB will take action to protect the Plan’s identified ERAs, EMUs, and region-wide features consistent with the agencies’ existing authorities.” From January through March, this subgroup should develop and incorporate as many recommended agency actions for as many important ecological areas as possible before the draft Plan needs to go out for public comment.

III. The RPB needs to continue post-2016 to implement the Plan and solidify its success.

After the Plan is complete at the end of 2016, the real work of implementation begins. There needs to be a regular means for us all to check in and ensure that actions are being taken and that the new information we are gaining can be applied to advise future improvements. We appreciated the management research forum and agenda recommended as an IJC action³ and hope that this work will be carried out as part of continued interactions among the RPB members. We are committed to working to secure funding for the RPB’s future efforts, and to working in partnership with you to protect our ocean health.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to share these considerations with you. We welcome discussion with you on any of these suggestions and look forward to continuing to work with you to advance a strong, environmentally protective OAP.

Sincerely,

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

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

Terra Pascaros
Director of Operations
Moms Clean Air Force Virginia

² *Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Draft Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions at 7*, available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Draft-MidA-RPB-IJC-Coordination-Actions-September-2015/>.

³ *Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Draft Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions at 9*, available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Draft-MidA-RPB-IJC-Coordination-Actions-September-2015/>.

Pam Lyons Gromen
Executive Director
Wild Oceans

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

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

Tim Dillingham
Executive Director
American Littoral Society

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Wed, Dec 2, 2015 at 4:15 PM
Subject: Re: Recommendations for Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions
To: "Chase, Alison" <achase@nrdc.org>
Cc: "Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov" <Robert.LaBelle@boem.gov>, "Gwynne Schultz -DNR-
(gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov)" <gwynne.schultz@maryland.gov>, "KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org"
<KelseyLeonard@shinnecock.org>, "MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov" <MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov>

Thank you for sending recommendations for interjurisdictional coordination actions. We will forward your letter to the members of the MidA RPB for consideration as we discuss our next steps. 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, and please plan to participate in the MidA RPB's public webinar on December 8.

On Wed, Dec 2, 2015 at 11:06 AM, Chase, Alison <achase@nrdc.org> wrote:

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

Sincerely, Ali Chase

ALISON CHASE
Senior Policy Analyst

**NATURAL RESOURCES
DEFENSE COUNCIL**
40 W 20TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011
T 212.727.4551

ACHASE@NRDC.ORG

NRDC.ORG

Please save paper.

Think before printing.

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

December 2, 2015

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Co-Leads:

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

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

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

Submitted electronically

Re: Recommendations for Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions

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

Our organizations understand that you, and the other members of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB), are working diligently to revise and update the interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) actions discussed at the September RPB meeting.¹ We appreciate your dedication to fleshing out this critical area of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP or Plan); the IJC actions are where the rubber meets the road and how the public and decision-makers will see the value of the RPB. Below, we offer several recommendations for inclusion in the Plan that would build on your proposed IJC actions and help attain this process' overarching goals of improved ocean health and increased sustainable use.²

I. RPB agencies must take steps to reduce or eliminate risk of degradation for important ocean resources, particularly for the Plan's ERAs, EMUs, and region-wide features.

The ecological data synthesis maps being developed under contract to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) will identify ecologically rich areas (ERAs), ecological marine units (EMUs), and region-wide features; these new characterizations of our ocean space are nothing short of game

¹ Materials available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlanti-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Events-September-2015/>.

² This letter builds upon comments submitted by many of our groups to the RPB on October 19, 2015, entitled "Recommendations from the September Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Meeting."

changers in our region’s ability to plan offshore. Certain areas, whether as a result of their structure or habitat or other aspect, simply exert an oversized influence on the ecosystem’s functioning, and some resources are so rare and/or vulnerable that steps need to be taken to reduce risk for the benefit of future generations. With the release of these maps, we will have a shared understanding of where core ecologically important ocean areas are. We do not expect that the delineating boundaries of these new areas will be perfect or that additional data gathering, particularly in light of a rapidly changing climate, will not be needed. However, acknowledging that more detail is needed does not detract from the landmark achievement to catalogue a portion of our ecological wealth or from the RPB agencies’ responsibility to take action to conserve these ocean workhorses now that they have been identified.

We strongly recommend that the RPB combine the Healthy Ocean Ecosystems Team’s action to “[i]dentify and recommend to appropriate agency(ies) actions to reduce or eliminate risk of degradation for each ERA”,³ and similar action pertaining to region-wide features, into a single statement committing that these areas, and EMUs, will receive the necessary conservation that they need and deserve as sentinels of our ocean health. We urge you to adopt as a priority IJC action:

“The agencies participating on the RPB will use their existing authorities to conserve the ERAs, EMUs, and region-wide features identified in the OAP to the fullest extent consistent with applicable law.”

Calling for conservation does not automatically generate “no go zones” where all activities are discouraged; we believe that multiple uses may be able to occur within important ecological areas so long as they do not detract from the areas’ functioning, and we urge you to clearly articulate this in the OAP to enhance understanding. As part of this commitment to conserve key areas within the bounds of their existing authorities, the RPB agencies must next analyze potential conflicts between important ecological areas and human uses and find ways to mitigate those conflicts through changes in management. We encourage the Healthy Ocean Ecosystems Team to work with relevant agencies to flesh out guidance from January through March – once we have both the ecological and human use data synthesis products in hand,⁴ but before the draft Plan needs to go out for public comment. This guidance should clearly identify agency-specific actions that should be adopted to first avoid and second minimize the adverse impacts of industrial uses to ecologically important areas.

To guide your discussion, we recommend consideration of the additional IJC actions we have provided in an attachment to this letter. Our organizations have worked to identify potential solutions to recurrent conflicts between ocean resources and industrial uses that we consistently note in agency comment letters (e.g., noise pollution during pile-driving). Actions listed are those that could be undertaken within existing agencies’ authorities. Incorporating these ideas into the Plan would help infuse it – and the RPB’s process – with real value.⁵

Please note that the requirement to conserve special places in the RPB’s Regional Ocean Action Plan is mirrored in the language of the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*

³ Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Draft Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions at 7, available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Draft-MidA-RPB-IJC-Coordination-Actions-September-2015/>.

⁴ Viewing potential conflicts between the ecological layer and human use work would be much easier if the RPB is able to find a way to superimpose these layers on each other in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal and we urge you to find a way to do this.

⁵ Please see Attachment A.

(Final Recommendations), which states that regional ocean planning should “improve ecosystem health and services by planning human uses in concert with the conservation of important ecological areas, such as areas of high productivity and biological diversity; areas and key species that are critical to ecosystem function and resiliency; areas of spawning, breeding, and feeding; areas of rare or functionally vulnerable marine resources; and migratory corridors ... [regional ocean planning] *ultimately is intended to result in protection of areas that are essential for the resiliency and maintenance of healthy ecosystem services and biological diversity, and to maximize the ability of marine resources to continue to support a wide variety of human uses.*”⁶ The RPB agencies should act to conserve these places as committed to in its Healthy Ocean Ecosystem Goal to “Promote ocean ecosystem health, functionality, and integrity *through conservation, protection, enhancement, and restoration.*”⁷

Our organizations also see an urgent need for the RPB agencies together to identify ocean health indicators that can serve as a first step toward development of ocean health metrics.⁸ Having measurable and meaningful objectives allows for regular checkups on marine health and will help track the OAP’s success. We recommend that the RPB flesh out its recommendation to identify Mid-Atlantic ocean indicators/ metrics and adopt:

“RPB agencies will identify a set of key ecological indicators/ trends/ statistics for the Mid-Atlantic region and commit to regularly updating and posting the most recent data on these on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. Agencies will work together and with the science community, with public input, to set objectives based on these indicators and others, as needed, to inform decision-making and improve the region’s ocean natural health.”

We further support the Healthy Ocean Ecosystems Team’s IJC actions dedicated to development of a management research forum for sharing current and proposed Mid-Atlantic ocean research and the development of a plan to assess and prepare for climate change impacts.⁹

II. The RPB should include IJC actions that foster early project coordination and commit to greater stakeholder involvement.

The need for improved agency coordination and increased decision-making transparency for our busy, shared ocean are fundamental drivers of regional planning. We appreciate that many current IJC actions stress the need for greater coordination between and among federal agencies, tribes, and states, but urge you to broaden the scope of review to include stakeholders, including the public, in early consideration of projects likely to leave a large footprint. We recommend the following action:

“RPB agencies will develop guidance for joint agency review of proposed large ocean or coastal projects (e.g., commercial scale offshore renewable projects) that prioritizes early and ongoing stakeholder and public involvement in assessing project viability. In such

⁶ Final Recommendations at 44, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf. Emphasis added.

⁷ Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework at 6, available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework/>. Emphasis added.

⁸ Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Draft Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions at 8, available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Draft-MidA-RPB-IJC-Coordination-Actions-September-2015/>.

⁹ Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Draft Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions at 9, available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Draft-MidA-RPB-IJC-Coordination-Actions-September-2015/>.

situations, lead federal agencies will convene a review team that includes relevant state and local authorities, tribal representatives, and interested public stakeholders, including representatives from non-consumptive ocean recreation, travel and tourism, conservation, and other interested organizations, to develop engagement processes, including public communications strategies to disseminate a summary of proposed project details, potential impacts and conflicts, and engagement opportunities. RPB agencies and review team members involved in the process, with open and transparent public discussion and input, will also create standards for assessing conflict mitigation strategies and impacts to recreational areas and ocean user groups and sectors, such as recreation, environment, and fishing for use in assessing the viability of the project and implementing safeguards should the project advance.”

Adopting this action would result in improved stakeholder engagement early in the review process where feedback is most valuable, as opposed to when the process is further down the road and interested parties have less flexibility. Identifying standards for assessing the impact on particular sectors would help reveal action consequences upfront, allowing for greater understanding of the decision’s impacts.

This recommendation advances the ideas under discussion by the Northeast Regional Planning Body regarding best practices for agency coordination¹⁰ and echoes a recent process created in Oregon in response to commercial scale wave energy project proposals. In Oregon, a “Joint Agency Review Team” for a particular proposal consists of all relevant government authorities, tribal representatives, and other groups (*e.g.*, NGOs, relevant committees), and evaluates potential projects against standards for impacts to various sectors.¹¹

III. The RPB should take steps to identify and foster sustainable ocean uses.

To support the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework’s focus on providing for existing and future sustainable uses,¹² the RPB should adopt the following IJC action:

“RPB agencies shall identify and protect high value non-consumptive recreation (NCR) areas in the Mid-Atlantic for various sectors (*e.g.*, diving, surfing, beach going, wildlife viewing). An RPB working group shall be convened and, with public input, assess conflicts and degradation to these areas, assess relevant federal, state, and tribal authorities that affect NCR uses, and develop methods for protection and evaluation of compatibility between NCR uses with other human uses and the environment and identify geographic NCR use data gaps.”

In the Mid-Atlantic, our ocean resources support more than 670,000 jobs, with the tourism and recreation sector representing almost three-quarters of these.¹³ Similar to the work that we have undertaken to identify and conserve important ecological areas, we need to identify and protect key NCR areas in the Mid-Atlantic.

Conclusion

¹⁰ See, for example, “4.1.1 Best Practices for Agency Coordination,” available at http://neoplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Draft-Section-4-1-1_Best-Practices-for-Agency-Coordination.pdf.

¹¹ See http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/docs/rulemaking/tspac/Part_5_FINAL_10082013.pdf.

¹² Framework at 7-8, available at <http://www.boem.gov/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework/>.

¹³ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Quick Report Tool for Socioeconomic Data. 2012. Available at: <http://coast.noaa.gov/quickreport/#/index.html>.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our recommendations with you. We welcome discussion with you on any of these concepts and hope to see the priority ideas found in this letter and key suggestions included in the attachment incorporated into the next round of draft IJC actions. Incorporation of these ideas would result in a bold, environmentally protective OAP that sets the stage for an improved ocean management future.

Sincerely,

Alison Chase
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

Pam Lyons Gromen
Executive Director
Wild Oceans

Matt Gove
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

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

Anne Merwin
Director, Ocean Planning
Ocean Conservancy

Roman Jesien
Acting Executive Director
Maryland Coastal Bays Program

Sarah Winter Whelan
Ocean Policy Program Director
American Littoral Society

ATTACHMENT A: FURTHER DRAFT IJC ACTIONS*

The following potential draft IJC actions are in addition to those given priority in the letter and are roughly grouped by category. Further details are available upon request.

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

1. Federal agencies will notify states of proposed projects that may affect the Plan's identified ERAs, EMUs, and region-wide features so that states can evaluate early in the process whether such a proposed project may affect the state's coastal resources and potentially trigger federal consistency review under the Coastal Zone Management Act.
2. RPB agencies will establish an online public hub as part of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal to post proposed project listings occurring within the region. Projects will be searchable by geographic location, keyword and category of project (*e.g.*, sand, wind) and linked to any relevant data on the Portal. The online hub shall have the capability for public users to subscribe for automatic email updates when new projects in their interest area(s) are posted, and shall clearly identify project timelines and next steps, as well as how public stakeholders may opt-in to engage in the public review process for any given project by providing a contact name, phone number and email address for the relevant agency responsible for managing public input on said project.

Offshore Wind Energy

3. NOAA should recommend and BOEM will adopt as a standard operating condition seasonal restrictions on sub-bottom profiling and pile driving for offshore wind site characterization and site assessment activities based on when North Atlantic right whales are likely to be present.
4. NOAA should recommend and BOEM will incorporate the best practices highlighted in the *NGO + Developers Mid-Atlantic Agreement* regarding vessel speed restrictions, use of noise attenuation and source level reduction technology, monitoring requirements, exclusion zones, visibility and aerial surveys into the agency's standard operating conditions for offshore wind leasing, site characterization, and site assessment activities.
5. Throughout the leasing, site characterization and assessment, and construction and operation phases of offshore wind development, NOAA should recommend and BOEM will take steps to avoid adverse noise and ship strike impacts to North Atlantic right whales to the fullest extent consistent with applicable law.
6. In order to achieve federal climate protection goals, RPB agencies shall, to the fullest extent consistent with applicable law, give priority to the leasing of areas for offshore renewable energy projects over the leasing or permitting of fossil fuel energy uses, including the siting of offshore liquid natural gas terminals.

* Please note that these draft IJC actions may not be supported by all signers, as not all organizations work on every issue noted below.

7. In the scheduling of offshore wind lease sales, BOEM will consider whether adjacent states, or other entities, such as power authorities, have adopted policies that will encourage offshore wind development in that area (*e.g.*, through power purchase agreements, renewable portfolio standards, etc.).
8. BOEM will host a science workshop to review methods of analyzing the potential cumulative impacts of the collective wind leasing and siting decisions on ocean life throughout the region, including on migratory species like the North Atlantic right whale. Based on the workshop's findings and recommendations, BOEM will take action to collect additional information necessary and to conduct, in coordination with NOAA, a comprehensive study of such impacts. BOEM will take steps to protect vulnerable species from cumulative impacts to the fullest extent consistent with applicable law.
9. BOEM will host a workshop with regional non-consumptive ocean recreation and tourism stakeholders to develop methods for analyzing potential cumulative impacts of wind leasing and siting decisions on recreational areas and diving and boating. Based on the workshop's findings and recommendations, BOEM will take action to conduct, in coordination with NOAA, a study of such impacts. BOEM will take steps to protect recreational areas from cumulative impacts to the fullest extent consistent with applicable law.
10. BOEM, in coordination with NOAA and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, will develop and implement guidance on measures to protect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), including Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, and gear-restricted areas identified for habitat protection in the Mid-Atlantic from offshore wind activities.

Offshore Sand Management

11. BOEM, in coordination with NOAA and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, will take steps to ensure that offshore sand and gravel mining does not alter existing bathymetry to a significant degree and does not adversely affect important offshore fish habitat areas or important fishing grounds.
12. The RPB agencies will create a centralized database as part of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal describing all state and federal sand management projects, including identified sand borrow sites, under consideration throughout the Mid-Atlantic, with permitting/application status. The database will also include information on how much sand and gravel has actually been removed by sand and gravel projects and where the removal has occurred.
13. USACE will develop and implement, in coordination with other agencies, states, tribal nations and with public input and review, a regional sediment management strategy, including dredge disposal and sediment reduction, with the goals of protecting the region's ecological health, helping to meet local and state beneficial reuse needs and reducing the need for offshore sand and gravel mining.
14. RPB agencies will develop guidance to protect ERAs, EMUs, and region-wide features and to identify and protect other important ecological, recreational, cultural and historical areas from

disturbance by dredging. Develop and implement mitigation measures to ensure short and long-term sand resource projects first avoid and second minimize adverse impacts to such areas.

15. The RPB agencies will coordinate with the public and stakeholders from conservation, non-consumptive recreation, and travel and tourism sectors to develop best management practices and mitigation measures to address potential use and values conflicts between sand management projects and near and offshore recreational activities, such as beach going, surfing, stand-up paddleboarding, SCUBA, and kiteboarding.
16. NOAA will update its EFH consultation guidance to require earlier consultation on the part of agencies with the relevant fishery management council(s) and with NMFS to accurately characterize fishery resources, the impact of a proposed project on EFH, the EFH protection recommendations and to describe the consequences of agency non-compliance with EFH recommendations.

Marine Commerce & Navigation

17. The Coast Guard, in coordination with NOAA's Navigation Services offices and with public and stakeholder engagement, will develop best practices to reduce vessel impacts on ocean-going wildlife, and promote adoption by key state and federal agencies. They will host a workshop to review current navigation interactions with marine wildlife including ship strike and ship-radiated noise, conduct an AIS analysis to evaluate compliance with regulations, assess past levels and locations of interactions with whales and other marine megafauna based on available data, and identify research needed to fill data gaps to better understand and reduce these impacts, especially with the anticipated increase in large vessel traffic to Mid-Atlantic ports.
18. With the expansion of the Panama Canal, Mid-Atlantic ports will be vying for larger new Panamax vessels, necessitating deepening, widening, and maintaining shipping lanes. NOAA will develop and USACE will implement guidance to avoid and mitigate impacts to benthic wildlife and habitats from shipping channel expansion and maintenance and increased ship traffic.
19. The Coast Guard should establish a performance standard that implements a Ballast Water Management System that is environmentally protective and scientifically sound to minimize the introduction and spread of marine invasive species. Coast Guard and MARAD would also establish a pilot project to monitor ballast water discharge in two Mid-Atlantic ports and publish the data in a public registry.
20. The Coast Guard's Atlantic Port Access Route Study (PARS) will protect ecologically rich areas (ERAs) and ecological marine units (EMUs) in route designations.

From: **MidAtlanticRPB, BOEM** <boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov>
Date: Tue, Dec 8, 2015 at 3:08 PM
Subject: Re: webinar follow up
To: Margaret Flanagan <mflanagan@waterfrontalliance.org>

Thank you for your message to the MidA RPB, and for participating in the webinar today. We appreciate your comments and will ask the MidA RPB members working on the non-consumptive recreation inter-jurisdictional coordination actions to contact you. We are also sharing your message with colleagues at the National Park Service, and we will post your message to the written public comments section on the MidA RPB webpage.

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

On Tue, Dec 8, 2015 at 1:57 PM, Margaret Flanagan <mflanagan@waterfrontalliance.org> wrote:

Dear MidA RPB,

Thank you for all your work and the informative webinar today. If the group does expand to include a Nonconsumptive Recreation Work Group, I'm very interested to participate and/or give contacts to recommend for participation. In my work at the Waterfront Alliance, we support restoration and revitalization across the NY-NJ Harbor waterfront region, including a strong constituent of recreational boaters and swimmers, with sailors, divers, and watch boats. We work closely with both City and State Parks on these topics, as well as with regulatory bodies. National Parks is also a partner on the waterfront here, but perhaps an agency level role would be appropriate for National Parks Service in contributing to the process.

I also sit on committees with our local EPA Estuary Program and USCG Harbor Operations, and it's positive to see the progress in interjurisdictional coordination at the RPB level.

Thank you very much, Maggie Flanagan

Capt. Margaret Flanagan
Maritime Operations Manager

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