

REMARKS FROM CLF RHODE ISLAND DIRECTOR TRICIA JEDELE ON THE APPROVAL OF THE RHODE ISLAND OCEAN SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN (SAMP)

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My name is Tricia Jedele. I am the Vice President and Director of Conservation Law Foundation's Rhode Island office. On behalf of Conservation Law Foundation, I would like to thank the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Governor Chafee for inviting us to share a few remarks with you in celebration of the formal adoption of the State's Ocean Special Area Management Plan.

Conservation Law Foundation is truly grateful to be included in today's event – as grateful as we were to be a part of the transparent and inclusive SAMP planning exercise that produced this document. It is a wonderful and amazing accomplishment that this comprehensive ocean use plan prepared by the smallest state in the country will now be used to help shape the future of sustainable ocean use in New England, including making the path straight for offshore wind energy and other important ocean uses.

So often referred to as merely "the SAMP," such a small name for such a massive undertaking, this document demonstrates that often the first step towards getting somewhere is simply deciding that you are not going to stay where you are any longer.

Rhode Island made the right decision. The State could no longer stay where it was. It had to develop a response to the growing threat of climate change. It had to find new and sustainable ways to create economic growth. It had to protect its ocean resources for today and future generations. And, it had to develop a vision for the coordinated use of those shared resources. Because RI decided that it was time to move ahead, the State is now in a position to facilitate the speedy development of the renewable energy resources we need so badly, to foster the centuries old fisheries industry – an industry that makes us proud to call ourselves New Englanders, and to protect the critical and vulnerable habitat areas that keep our oceans healthy.

Not only is the SAMP a critical building block to the development of a regional comprehensive ocean management plan for New England and a milestone for Rhode Island's ocean waters, but the SAMP is also a testament to the foresight and dedication of the people working for the State of Rhode Island.

CLF would like to share with you our sincere appreciation of the staff of the Coastal Resource Management Council, and the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island, and the Council itself, for their enduring willingness to engage all of Rhode Island in this effort, to create a genuine sense of participation and a healthy and positive view of our ocean resources. This team never backed down from a difficult question (even when the hour was late), never failed to receive and hear and learn from the many comments thrown their way (and CLF threw its fair share). The State made a sincere effort to be responsive and to allow this ocean use tool to evolve in a way that reflected the science and the voices of all those organizations and individuals trying to shape it.

As a result of the State's fearless approach to public engagement and science-driven planning, Rhode Island is now a national leader, with a plan that will serve as a model for the country.