

MASSACHUSETTS OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN

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For a thriving New England

Massachusetts: A National Leader in Ocean Planning

A requirement of the Massachusetts Oceans Act of 2008, the Massachusetts Ocean Plan (Ocean Plan) was created to ensure the protection of the state's Special, Sensitive or Unique (SSU) ocean areas while also encouraging responsible ocean development, including renewable energy, in state ocean waters. The creation of the plan proceeded in three phases: information and data gathering; draft plan development; and formal public review of the draft plan and the finalization of the plan. An extensive public participation program was conducted during each phase of the planning process with public listening sessions and workshops held across the state, more than 300 public comments filed regarding the draft plan, formal public hearings held after the release of the draft plan, and hundreds of meetings with diverse stakeholders, including marine pilots, fishermen, energy developers, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

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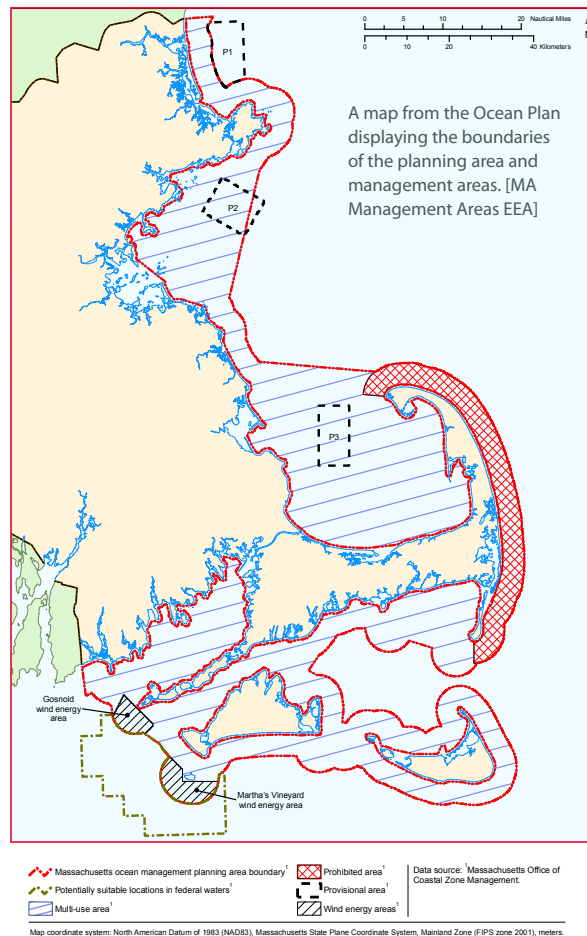
PROTECTING OCEAN RESOURCES AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In January of 2010, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts made history with the release of the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan, the nation's first-ever comprehensive ocean planning document. The Ocean Plan was created through a thorough and inclusive stakeholder engagement process and will chart the course for the sustainable use of Massachusetts's ocean waters.

The final plan was released in January 2010, making Massachusetts the first state in the nation with a comprehensive ocean management plan. The Ocean Plan designates management areas for Massachusetts state waters - those up to three miles off of the Massachusetts coast - making for a total management area of over 2,000 square miles. There are three categories of these management areas: prohibited, renewable energy, and multi-use.

Protecting Special, Sensitive or Unique Ocean Areas

Using extensive data collection and analysis, the Ocean Plan identified those areas that are important for special, sensitive or unique (SSU) species or habitats. Ten such areas were identified, including: core habitat for North Atlantic right whales, fin whales, and humpback whales; roseate



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tern core habitat; areas of hard/complex seafloor; intertidal flats; and areas of high importance to commercial and recreational fisheries.

The identification of SSU areas will be of great importance as the state sites projects in the multi-use management area created by the Ocean Plan. A majority of state waters are designated as part of the multi-use management area. In these waters, a variety of uses, activities and facilities, including aquaculture, cables and pipelines, and wave and tidal energy facilities, are permitted, provided they meet siting and performance standards and avoid adversely affecting SSU areas. This helps ensure the protection of the ocean uses and activities that are most important to us while still allowing for the development of new uses and facilities.

The Ocean Plan also contains a prohibited management area that overlays the Cape Cod Ocean Sanctuary, which runs along the east coast of Cape Cod. In contrast with the multi-use management area, where many uses are permitted as long as they meet certain standards and avoid adversely impacting important resources, the Cape Cod Ocean Sanctuary, prohibits certain uses such as building structures on or under the seabed and drilling or removing sand, gravel, or other minerals, gases, or oils.

Charting a Course Forward for Renewable Energy

In addition to protecting important ocean areas while allowing low-impact development, the Ocean Plan will help Massachusetts reach its clean energy goals through the development of renewable energy. The Ocean Plan identifies two commercial-scale wind energy areas in southeast state waters where suitable wind resources and water depth are present and there is no conflict with other uses or sensitive resources. In addition to these ideal wind energy areas, the Ocean Plan identifies three "provisional" wind energy areas that have potential for future development. The Ocean Plan also identifies areas in federal waters that are potentially suitable for wind energy development, but because these locations fall outside state waters, the Ocean Plan and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts do not have jurisdiction over their management. However, at the Commonwealth's request, the federal government is investigating areas of federal waters for large-scale wind energy development.



North Atlantic Right Whale

The Ocean Plan identified and protects important habitat for pictures such as the North Atlantic right whale, pictured here.

Aerial View NOAA



Offshore Wind DOE

The Ocean Plan will help Massachusetts reach its clean energy goals through the development of renewable energy such as offshore wind energy.

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