



*The New Jersey*

# COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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## Ocean Resources Management in New Jersey

New Jersey has 127 miles of coastline along the Atlantic Ocean, as well as shorelands bordering New York/New Jersey Harbor, Raritan Bay and Delaware Bay. Currently, the state is challenged to balance many competing uses for its ocean resources: commercial and recreational fishing, sand mining for beach nourishment, dredged material disposal, navigation, placement of submerged fiber-optic cables, development of alternative energy sources, and a host of other commercial and recreational activities. While use of ocean resources is economically important to the state, protecting the health of the marine environment is also vital for residents and visitors alike. Healthy marine ecosystems are necessary to sustain coastal tourism—including recreational boating and beach visitation—one of the largest industries in the state. Establishing a balance among current uses and the needs of future generations is an important step towards ensuring the sustainability of New Jersey's ocean resources.

As part of its Section 309 Coastal Zone Enhancement Strategy, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Coastal Planning, has begun an in-depth process to develop an Ocean Resources Management Plan. This plan will enable more effective management of ocean resources through improved coordination among government agencies, and consensus building among various stakeholders. Furthermore, this Ocean Resources Management Plan will enhance the state's ability to determine the consistency of federal actions occurring in the coastal ocean, with the policies of the federally approved New Jersey Coastal Management Plan.

Ocean resources have economic, recreational and aesthetic values, and there can be conflicts among diverse users of ocean resources:

- Impaired ocean water quality due to non-point sources of pollution can have a detrimental impact on both the fishing industry and the coastal tourism industry.
- In order to maintain efficient ports, periodic dredging of shipping channels is necessary. Inappropriate disposal of dredged materials has the potential to pollute the marine environment, and conflict with other uses of the ocean.
- Commercial fishing operations and recreational fishing interests compete for limited fish stocks.
- A growing number of submerged utilities, such as fiber-optic cables, are located in New Jersey's coastal zone. These utilities can create conflicts with fishing gear when located in areas that have traditionally been used for fishing and shellfishing.
- Sand mining for beach nourishment projects may occur in areas that are important marine fish habitat. As major beach nourishment projects are authorized, competition for limited sand resources may increase in the future.

New Jersey's ocean resources play an important role in the state, the nation and the world:

- Healthy marine fisheries provide employment opportunities for commercial operations, food for local and regional markets, as well as recreational fishing opportunities for visitors and residents. The commercial fishing industry generates \$100 million to the New Jersey economy annually.
- The Port of New York and New Jersey is the largest container port on the east coast of the United States. The port generates more than 228,900 direct and indirect

jobs and \$30 billion in regional economic activity. The Port of Philadelphia and Camden serves as an important international seaport with over 3,000 vessels utilizing port facilities each year. These vessels provide a wide range of goods and services for millions of people throughout the state and the nation.

- Coastal tourism is extremely important to the state economy. Millions of people from throughout the world visit the New Jersey shore each year. Tourism in the four

shore counties generates approximately \$16 billion to the state economy and provides thousands of jobs throughout the region. Good water quality, healthy beaches, and abundant recreational opportunities are essential to attracting visitors and sustaining coastal tourism.

- Artificial reefs off the coast of New Jersey provide valuable marine habitat, which is important to sustaining the recreational fishing industry, as well as for providing

sport diving opportunities.

- New Jersey's ocean resources also have value that cannot be measured in economic terms. Healthy marine ecosystems serve as the basis for ocean-based recreational opportunities. Protection of marine ecosystems not only allows for future generations to enjoy a healthy ocean environment, but also provides a coastal environment of aesthetically pleasing surroundings that has attracted visitors for 150 years.

## Federal Consistency

Federal Consistency is an important tool that gives states extensive input regarding federal activities occurring in adjacent federal ocean waters. The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA) authorizes coastal states to develop coastal management plans, subject to federal approval, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Section 307 of the CZMA requires federal actions, occurring inside or outside of a state's coastal zone, that have a reasonable potential to affect the coastal resources or uses of that state's coastal zone, to be consistent with that state's approved coastal management plan to the maximum extent practicable.

For example, if the federal government establishes a management plan for marine fisheries outside of the state's three-mile limit, but the plan has an effect on New Jersey fishermen, the federal government plan must be consistent with New Jersey's enforceable coastal policies. Likewise, if the federal government issues a permit for a submerged fiber-optic cable outside New Jersey's three-mile limit, but the cable has the potential to affect the coastal resources or uses of New Jersey's coastal zone, the federal permit must be consistent with the implementing regulations of New Jersey's approved coastal management plan.

## Next Steps in New Jersey's Ocean Resources Management Initiative

The development of New Jersey's Ocean Resources Management Plan will occur in three stages. The first stage is currently underway, and focuses on clarifying the existing governance framework for ocean resources offshore of New Jersey, including associated management roles and user group interests. The development of an ocean governance framework document will assist the Office of Coastal Planning's work in examining future coordination and policy strategies. The second stage of this process will prioritize the ocean resources management topics of concern for New Jersey, utilizing input from the stakeholders identified in the first phase. Focus groups will be convened for an in-depth analysis regarding issues of conflicting management roles, opportunities for improved coordination, and policy recommendations for the sustainable use and management of ocean resources. The final stage of this process will be the development of the Ocean Resources Management Plan document, containing recommendations for New Jersey ocean policy.

In addition, the New Jersey Office of Coastal Planning, along with a number of other coastal states, has become involved in the National Ocean Economics Project (NOEP). The goal of this project is to research and identify the economic benefits of ocean resources. The results of this initiative will enable the state to identify ocean-based sectors that are of high economic importance and make coastal and ocean related funding decisions based on a full range of economic data.

## Ocean Governance in New Jersey State /Federal Jurisdiction

The New Jersey Coastal Management Program (NJCMP), through the Department of Environmental Protection, is the primary state authority for stewardship of ocean resources. The state's coastal zone extends out to three miles from shore. The state of New Jersey shares responsibility with the federal government for managing resources and activities within this three-mile limit. The United States Territorial Sea extends from 3 to 12 nautical miles from shore, with the federal government having sovereignty over resources in this area. The US Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extends from 12 to 200 nautical miles offshore. In the EEZ, the federal government has authority over the seabed resources as well as living marine resources.

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