

Massachusetts Ocean Partnership

STATEMENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS OCEAN PARTNERSHIP TO THE CEQ NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY TASK FORCE Field Hearing – Providence, RI September 24, 2009

Good afternoon. I am Stephanie Moura, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Ocean Partnership. Thank you members of the Task Force for your extensive efforts to obtain expert, stakeholder, and public input while executing your important charge.

I respect your daunting assignment because we in Massachusetts live and breathe ocean management planning— we are doing it every day. We've been caught up in a welcome flurry of productivity since the Mass Oceans Act was signed into law in May 2008. As you are aware, Massachusetts delivered the first *draft* comprehensive ocean plan in the U.S. in July.

Our ocean planning process has been likened to the Perfect Storm of Marine Spatial Planning— a herculean task, meets a mass of conflicting ocean uses, limited information and constrained resources, all of which collide headlong with a nearly impossible deadline. But in *this* case, our experience has shown these forces produced the Perfect Storm....of *Opportunity*.

Your interim report recognizes that a robust National Policy must be both stakeholder informed and science based— but, how do you do that? The Massachusetts Ocean Partnership public-private model represents a new approach for launching an ecosystem-based ocean management plan into action. It's been our pleasure to partner with, and support the exhaustive efforts of, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The State has the mandate and authority to develop the Plan, the Partnership brings essential supplemental resources and expertise to support their needs. So, today, I speak to you from our real-life experience, not just theory. The Partnership provides funding, strategic and technical support for efforts including:

- Cumulative Impact Analysis
- Collaboration on development of a dynamic Ocean Data Network so that all interested parties — stakeholders, researchers, project proponents, and resource managers— can access current information.
- And we Facilitate Cross-sector Dialogue— to help diverse interests find common ground.



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In our experience, this public-private partnership model works, and works well. We believe this is due, in part, because we are *not* an advocacy group. We represent no *single* interest—rather, we seek to advance ecosystem based management for the benefit of all ocean uses. We work with over 65 Partner organizations ranging from the Mass Fisherman’s Partnership to the Marine Renewable Energy Center to the Massachusetts Port Authority— real people with real interests in ocean services.

Our work over the last 15 months has taught us a great deal. I’d like to share three key observations from our experience:

First, despite initial fears that the Perfect Storm presented— we learned that nothing gets done without a deadline:

- The Oceans Act set a lofty goal with a draconian timeline. The reality is “more good work can be accomplished with an *impossible* deadline than with an infinite planning horizon.”

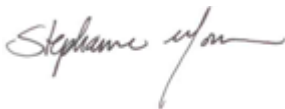
Second, inclusivity is the best preventive medicine:

- State officials earned the respect of diverse and routinely conflicting groups by letting everyone “in on” the process, exposing both its strengths and its shortcomings.

And finally, MSP will benefit from a *national* approach on strategy and principles coupled with tactics that reflect the unique character and circumstances of each state and region.

In conclusion, the Massachusetts Ocean Partnership will remain focused on supporting efforts in our state to develop and implement an effective ocean plan. One that lays the foundation for continued evolution and adaptive management for years to come. Our work can support others in the Northeast facing common regulatory, stakeholder engagement and science integration challenges. We hope that our example can help chart a secure course through this Perfect Storm of Opportunity for the *Nation’s* ocean policy future.

Thank you.



Stephanie Moura - Executive Director
Massachusetts Ocean Partnership

