

# Massachusetts Ocean Partnership

October 27, 2009

Dear Chairwoman Sutley and the members of Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force:


We have reviewed your Interim Report and thoroughly embrace its scope and ultimate goals. Transitioning from traditional, sector-by-sector ocean management toward ecosystem-based marine spatial planning is a necessity—and exactly our approach here in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Ocean Partnership (MOP) is a recent innovation created in response to an urgent need. A public-private partnership working hand-in-hand with our State Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, MOP is committed to helping Massachusetts create and implement the best ocean management plan possible—one that fairly represents all interests, is based on the best available scientific information and, ultimately, supports resilient ocean ecosystems and productive economies. MOP brings additional intellectual and strategic resources to supplement the state-led planning process. Substantive work requires significant funding. We estimate the overall investment in the first generation Massachusetts Ocean Plan to be promulgated this December will be \$3 million (approximately \$1.4 million state investment plus \$1.6 million in MOP-funded support). If this public-private partnership model is to continue toward the development of a full-fledged, ecosystem-based marine spatial plan over the next 2-4 years, it will undoubtedly require additional funding. This working model now has a track record of nimbleness, transparency/accountability and responsiveness to a widely representative array of partners. We believe our success to date is largely because:

- We facilitate constructive, meaningful stakeholder participation;
- We support the integration of credible scientific work including the analysis of cumulative human impacts, decision support tools and socioeconomic valuation of ecosystem services into the planning process; and
- We fill a unique niche as a nonpartisan broker for over 65 partner organizations representing diverse ocean-use interests, all coming together for a singular purpose—to support ecosystem-based marine spatial planning (<http://www.massoceanpartnership.org/>).

If we have gleaned only one lesson from our “on the water” experience in ocean management planning over the last 18 months, it is that nothing gets done without a deadline. We recognize the complexity and enormity of your charge but, for those who will try to dissuade you and slow the process, we feel it is important to keep in mind that more good work can be accomplished with a seemingly impossible deadline than with an infinite planning horizon. We are making solid progress in Massachusetts and the Northeast Region of the United States and we aim to continue. Please let us know if we can be of any direct assistance with your important work—we would be honored to help.

Thank you,



Stephanie Moura  
Executive Director- Massachusetts Ocean Partnership

