

**“Making Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Work:
The Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)”**

**Under Secretary of Commerce for the Oceans and Atmosphere
and NOAA Administrator
Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.**

Opening remarks

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Narragansett, RI

Thank you, Dennis. And THANK YOU RHODE ISLAND!

Governor Chafee; Senator Reed, Senator Whitehouse, who are absent but with us in spirit; and distinguished guests, thank you for your hard work and steadfast commitment to this project.

Today is a landmark event for the State of Rhode Island and for the Nation. Today we announce NOAA’s approval, under the authority of the Coastal Zone Management Act, of the incorporation the first-of-its-kind ocean management plan into the State’s federally-approved coastal management program.

Together, we set an example for the Nation. We are showing how state and federal government can work together to benefit the many and diverse users of Rhode Island’s oceans and coasts. One look at the beautiful bay outside provides compelling motivation for our actions. We need to make sure that our children, our grandchildren, and the generations to come have a chance to enjoy and benefit from the ocean’s beauty and bounty.

One year ago this week, President Obama signed the Executive Order establishing the first ever National Ocean Policy. This policy — the *National Policy for Stewardship of the Oceans, Coasts, and Great Lakes* — is about **good governance – governance informed by sound science**. This policy says, “**healthy oceans matter**”.

The Rhode Island plan is what President Obama envisioned in the National Ocean Policy. It sets a great example for other coastal states.

Prior to this plan, individual proposals for new ocean uses generated conflict that wasted time and energy. Now, with this plan, there is overarching guidance about balancing different uses.

A healthy economy and a healthy ocean go hand in hand. This plan enables both. This plan will create jobs, while helping to meet the White House’s energy goal of reducing the nation’s use of oil by one-third by a little more than a decade from now. Especially on a hot day like today, everyone appreciates the need to have clean renewable energy.

Rhode Island knows that its energy future depends in part on offshore wind. But Rhode Island is smart enough to know that offshore wind power can't come at the expense of existing ocean users and their cultural heritage.

Rhode Island knows that multiple sectors use the ocean. So you brought fishermen, shipping interests, conservationists, Tribal interests, and many others to the table.

Rhode Island knows that decisions based on solid science will be smarter and more durable. So you engaged scientists and made scientific information readily available and understandable.

You worked as a community and you looked to good science to set a course for a future that's good for the economy, good for the ocean, and good for the people who live here.

I applaud your open dialogue across users. Sustaining that dialogue will be key to continued success.

The President's National Ocean Policy calls for Marine Spatial Planning. We've heard people say that comprehensive marine planning can't work. We've heard that it's too complicated, and that it will slow down the siting process. We've heard that people will never overcome their differences.

But, Rhode Island's Ocean Special Area Management Plan *is* coastal and marine spatial planning. You proved the skeptics and nay-sayers wrong. Rhode Island's process and plan is now *the* template process for others to use. By bringing diverse ocean interests to the table, this plan reduces uncertainty. In the long run, the new plan reduces costs and makes authorization of offshore renewable energy projects more efficient.

Today we celebrate so much more than a plan. We celebrate the future: a future where clean jobs build technologies for a clean future. These same clean jobs will make RI an incubator for a clean energy future.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that NOAA's ability to provide assistance through the CZ program, or provide services that support activities on the water such as wind forecast, severe storm warnings, and search and rescue are at great risk right now, with looming budget cuts and policy restrictions. For us to be the kind of partners we would like to be, we need your help.

We applaud your early work within the region, with other states, like MA, and with the federal family. And we hope you'll lead the way again in working together with neighboring states and regional entities, like the New England Fishery Management Council and the Northeast Regional Ocean Council, to manage the ocean and coasts you share. The success of the SAMP and these other efforts will require continued and active engagement of all relevant parties but especially fishermen, both commercial and recreational, and the aquaculture industry.

We look forward to continued strong leadership for Rhode Island.

My compliments and my thanks.