

# Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean

## *A Partnership in Ocean Conservation*

### Power of a Unified Regional Voice:

The Governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia joined together on June 4, 2009 to create the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) advancing a collaborative approach for addressing the challenges facing our region's coastal and ocean resources. MARCO designated four priorities for shared action to improve ocean health:

- Coordinate protection of important habitats and sensitive and unique offshore areas on a regional scale;
- Promote improvements in the region's coastal water quality;
- Collaborate on a regional approach to support the sustainable development of renewable energy in offshore areas; and
- Prepare the region's coastal communities for the impacts of climate change on ocean and coastal resources.

The five states have explicitly recognized the unique power of a unified regional voice to influence federal action and funding. Collaborating on a regional scale will strengthen the Mid-Atlantic States' voice with Congress and federal agencies in shaping the future of our coastal and offshore resources.

### Themes for Our Congressional Agenda:

- Work with the White House Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force to link the efforts of the federal government and regional ocean partnerships in addressing priority ocean issues.
- Secure federal action to protect key offshore habitats, increase species and habitat data collection efforts, and support marine spatial planning that identifies other important habitats and emerging threats.
- Call for changes to federal legislation that will provide opportunities to act regionally to improve water quality.
- Promote greater and smarter federal investments for upgrades to the region's wastewater treatment infrastructure.
- Identify renewable energy development industry needs, funding sources, best practices, and innovative research and development in order to facilitate renewable energy development
- Remove unnecessary Federal barriers to the appropriate development of offshore renewable energy development.
- Identify opportunities to promote adaptation and, where appropriate, integrate climate change and sea level rise planning measures into federal policies and programs.



# Legislative Actions



*To be notified of updates to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean website and to receive announcements, please send an e-mail request to: [marco@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:marco@dep.state.nj.us)*

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### **Proposed Initial Actions:**

These initial actions are contained in the August 2009 “Actions, Timelines, and Leadership to Advance the Mid-Atlantic Governors’ Agreement on Ocean Conservation”

#### **Habitats and Sensitive and Unique Offshore Areas**

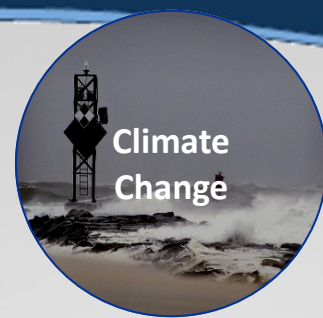
- By the start of the next legislative session (2010) develop a legislative agenda and prepare joint statements for issue via Congressional delegates.
- During the current legislative session, or as appropriate, identify and comment on relevant federal legislative initiatives, such as:
  - ◇ Flexibility in Rebuilding American Fisheries Act of 2009
  - ◇ National Fish Habitat Conservation Act of 2009
  - ◇ Ocean Conservation, Education, and National Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act
  - ◇ (Integrated) Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009
  - ◇ Reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act

#### **Coastal Water Quality**

- By the start of the next legislative session (2010) develop a legislative agenda and prepare issue joint statements for issue via Congressional delegates.
- During the current legislative session, or as appropriate, identify and comment on relevant federal legislative initiatives, such as reauthorization of the:
  - ◇ Clean Water Act
  - ◇ Surface Transportation Act

#### **Renewable Energy in Offshore Areas**

- Engage our congressional delegations to support the alignment of the Federal and State issues related to offshore wind energy permitting, including agency planning efforts and the broad coordination effort underway through the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force.
- Submit a joint request to modify the production tax credit for wind development by extending it from its current expiration in 2012 to instead expire in 2016.
- Submit a joint request to modify Section 1603 of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009, to extend the deadline from 2010 to 2016 for offshore wind energy developers to submit applications under the Renewable Energy Cash Grant Program.



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