



July 24, 2007

Senator Steven C. Panagiotakos, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Room 212, State House
Boston, MA 02133

RE: **S. 2281**, the *Massachusetts Ocean Act*

Dear Chairman Panagiotakos,

Our organizations urge you to act now to report favorably **S. 2281**, the *Massachusetts Ocean Act*, from your committee for a vote on the Senate floor. This legislation calls for the development and implementation of an ocean management plan that would promote environmentally sustainable activities in Massachusetts's waters, while protecting valuable marine resources. If enacted, this legislation would be the first of its kind in the United States.

Recent proposals for liquefied natural gas terminals, sand and gravel mining, desalinization plants, gas pipelines, telecommunications cables, and wind energy facilities have raised numerous concerns among citizens and local, state, and federal agencies about how to manage the diversity of uses and the impacts of this intensified development pressure on the marine ecosystem. Governance structures for ocean resources management have historically focused on single resources or activities. Public decisions about whether to allow certain activities have occurred through a case-by-case, reactive and fragmented approach. New legislation is needed to give public agencies clear direction and stronger authority for managing activities in a proactive manner.

The *Massachusetts Ocean Act* would bring the Bay State up to speed with private industry innovations and associated management challenges in our ocean waters. The bill would require the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to develop and implement an ocean management plan to guide uses and activities in state waters.

We urge you to seize this opportunity to lead the rest of the nation in crafting comprehensive ocean policy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Brooks
Director
Marine Conservation Program
Conservation Law Foundation

Jack Clarke
Director of Public Policy
& Government Relations
Mass Audubon

John Phillips
Director
New England Regional Office
The Ocean Conservancy

cc: Senate President Therese Murray