

National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan

Coastal communities

Our ocean deeply impacts the lives of all Americans, none more than those who live in coastal communities. Shoreline counties covering only 10 percent of the U.S. land area contained 39 percent of the population in 2011, and contributed \$6.6 trillion, just under half – of our Nation’s Gross Domestic Product that year.

Coastal communities are also on the front line for weathering the impacts of storms, sea level rise, and climate change. The National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan identifies specific actions Federal agencies will take to support coastal communities, improve ocean health, and provide the best available information.



Federal agencies have committed to actions in the Implementation Plan that will benefit coastal communities, including:

- Share more and better data about severe storms and sea-level rise;
- Protect, restore, or enhance 100,000 acres of wetlands, wetland-associated uplands, and high-priority coastal, upland, urban and island habitat;
- Support ongoing work to develop recommendations to ensure flood insurance rate maps incorporate the best available climate science;
- Provide guidance to waterfront property owners on environmentally responsible management options for shoreline erosion; and
- Research and communicate about the direct and indirect impacts of climate change, ocean acidification, and other stressors on coastal communities, infrastructure, and economies, and key species, habitats, and ecosystems.

The Implementation Plan also supports voluntary regional marine planning, which brings together ocean users to share information to plan how we use and sustain ocean resources. Neither the National Ocean Policy nor marine planning creates or changes regulations or authorities.

The vision of the National Ocean Policy is an America whose stewardship ensures that the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured so as to promote the well-being, prosperity, and security of present and future generations.

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Excerpts from the Implementation Plan:

“Coastal habitats protect coastal communities, homes, infrastructure, and businesses against damage from erosion and flooding, they support hundreds of thousands of jobs, they improve water quality by filtering and detoxifying runoff, they dampen the outbreak of pests and pathogens, they capture and store carbon, and they yield compounds for life-saving medicines.”

“Federal agencies will work together to support the various national, State, tribal, and local efforts to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate or avoid the degradation and loss of ocean and coastal habitats, water quality, and ecosystems through improved capabilities, proactive stewardship, strengthened research, and enhanced collaboration. Agencies will also enable and support efforts to understand, minimize, and adapt to the impacts of climate change, ocean acidification, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events, strengthening the resilience of coastal communities.”

The Appendix of the National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan lists the specific actions Federal agencies have committed to take.

The Implementation Plan and Appendix are available online at www.whitehouse.gov/oceans.