



NOAA approves Rhode Island plan for offshore energy development, job creation and ocean stewardship

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NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D. joined Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee, U.S. Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, and other national and state leaders today to recognize the pioneering Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan (Ocean SAMP). This new, innovative ocean management plan improves state review processes and policies to facilitate the development of offshore projects that could lead to the creation of hundreds of wind energy jobs and balance energy development with transportation, fishing, recreation and environmental stewardship along the state's coast and adjacent federal waters.

"By developing this plan, Rhode Island has emerged as a national leader in coastal management and ocean stewardship," said Lubchenco, who joined state leaders on the shore of Narragansett Bay today to recognize the plan's approval. "This plan takes into account all ocean uses for enhancing commercial, recreational and environmental goals. This plan is what President Obama envisioned in the National Ocean Policy, and it sets a great example for other coastal states."

The Ocean SAMP area spans approximately 1,467 square miles over portions of Block Island Sound, Rhode Island Sound, and the Atlantic Ocean. It was developed over the course of two years by the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council with the assistance of the University of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Sea Grant program and Roger Williams University, along with significant input from many other state, federal, tribal and local agencies, as well as other interested parties and the public.

With NOAA's approval of the state's Ocean SAMP under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act, Rhode Island becomes the first state to have incorporated a comprehensive ocean special area management plan in its coastal zone management program. This approval means that enforceable policies in the Ocean SAMP for protecting existing activities such as fishing, important habitats and archaeological resources, and identifying areas suitable for energy projects, may be applied to federal actions in federal waters.

"Once again, the Ocean State is leading the nation in creating a plan for using ocean resources to create and sustain jobs, help our state build renewable energy, and continue to preserve the historic fishing, transportation, recreation and other uses of the ocean that Rhode Islanders so treasure," said Gov. Chafee. "This plan will help our state reach its 15 percent renewable energy goal and continue to protect the coastal areas that drive tourism to our state."

Using the best available science, the Ocean SAMP provides a comprehensive understanding of Rhode Island's complex and rich ecosystems. It covers topics including renewable energy and other offshore development, marine transportation and infrastructure, cultural and historic resources, and global climate change. To view the Ocean SAMP, visit: <http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/>.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

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