NORTHEAST REGIONAL OCEAN COUNCIL

February 2, 2010

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-131 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-218 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515-6015

Re: Acting on economic and shoreline management issues in the Northeast

Dear Senator Inouye and Representative Obey:

I am writing today to urge your support for a FY 2011 appropriation (see attached overview) to:

- Improve water quality;
- Protect and restore coastal habitats; and
- Implement national ocean policy and the region's ocean governance plans.

The New England Governors created the Northeast Regional Ocean Council as a state-federal partnership to "*facilitate the development of more coordinated and collaborative regional goals and priorities, and to improve responses to regional issues.*" It serves as a regional priority-setting body that helps state and federal agencies and non-governmental entities leverage resources to collaborate on common regional water quality and habitat goals.

The shorelines of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont and New York are vital to human health and the region's economy: millions of people depend on them for food, recreation, transportation, and drinking water. Yet, each day, our streams, lakes, bays, and beaches are damaged by untreated run-off, pollution, invasive species, loss of wildlife habitat, and other human-caused impacts. The problems are serious and many of them have the potential of reaching crisis proportions. There are manageable solutions – some already in various stages of implementation – but if we don't move quickly the problems will only get worse and the solutions more expensive.

The Northeast states, through several regional initiatives, are pursuing a coordinated and collaborative approach to coastal and watershed issues that require an inter-state response. Similar to regional ocean governance efforts around the nation's shores, these state-federal partnerships are guided by consensus-based plans that leverage local and state commitments.

This request will address our most pressing needs for the balanced development and protection of critical shoreline, ocean and coastal resources. Our work implements the nation's water quality and ocean policies, enhances the mission of our federal partners, and leverages other resources in the region. Thank you for your support of these important and timely efforts to improve the sustainable development of our region's treasured fresh and saltwater ecosystems and resources.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Leyden, Chair

cc: New England and New York Congressional Delegations
Chair, White House Committee on Ocean Policy
Ranking Minority Members, Senate & House Appropriations Committee
Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator, NOAA
Ms. Lisa Jackson, Administrator, USEPA
Marvin Moriarty, Regional Director, USFWS
Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior

OVERVIEW

2011 Request: Conserving and restoring Northeast's water quality and associated habitats

Request: $70 million

$70 million through the Interior, EPA and Related Agencies Appropriations Act as follows:

$20 million to the EPA's Long Island Sound Office
Purpose: Implement the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.
Examples of Activities – Address hypoxia, toxics, pathogens, floatable debris, land use and development activities that impact the Connecticut and New York shorelines in Long Island Sound.

$20 million to EPA for high priority water quality projects in New England Great Waters Ecosystems (in ME, NH, MA, RI, and VT)
Purpose: Address non-point sources of pollution as described in state coastal water quality plans. Projects will be awarded on a competitive process, evenly distributed between the New England states, and require no state or municipal match.
Examples of activities – Control polluted runoff from six main sources: forestry, agriculture, urban areas, marinas, shoreline and stream channel modification, and wetlands and riparian areas.

$5 million to the US Fish and Wildlife Service in New England Great Waters Ecosystems
Purpose: Address coastal fish and wildlife priorities and invasive species issues. Projects will be awarded on a competitive basis and evenly distributed between the New England states.
Examples of activities – Work in partnership with the states to acquire lands and otherwise protect priority habitats, including the coastal upland buffer zone and seabird islands, restore coastal marsh hydrology and morphology; restore fish passage; and control invasive plant and animal species.

$15 million to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in New England Great Waters Ecosystems
Purpose: Address habitat restoration and marine debris issues. Projects will be awarded on a competitive basis and evenly distributed between the New England states.
Examples of activities – Work in partnership with the states to remove barriers to prime aquatic habitats that hinder fish restoration efforts, restore coastal marshes, and remove and properly dispose of marine debris.

$10 million to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (in ME, NH, MA, RI and CT)
Purpose: Implement national ocean policy and New England ocean governance plans in collaboration with Northeast Regional Ocean Council.
Examples of activities – Assist coastal municipalities adapt to sea level rise; implement state climate change plans; support state-federal marine spatial planning partnerships throughout the region including the bi-state Long Island Sound; address leading ecosystem health issues through policy changes and communications; enable states to implement national ocean governance standards; etc.