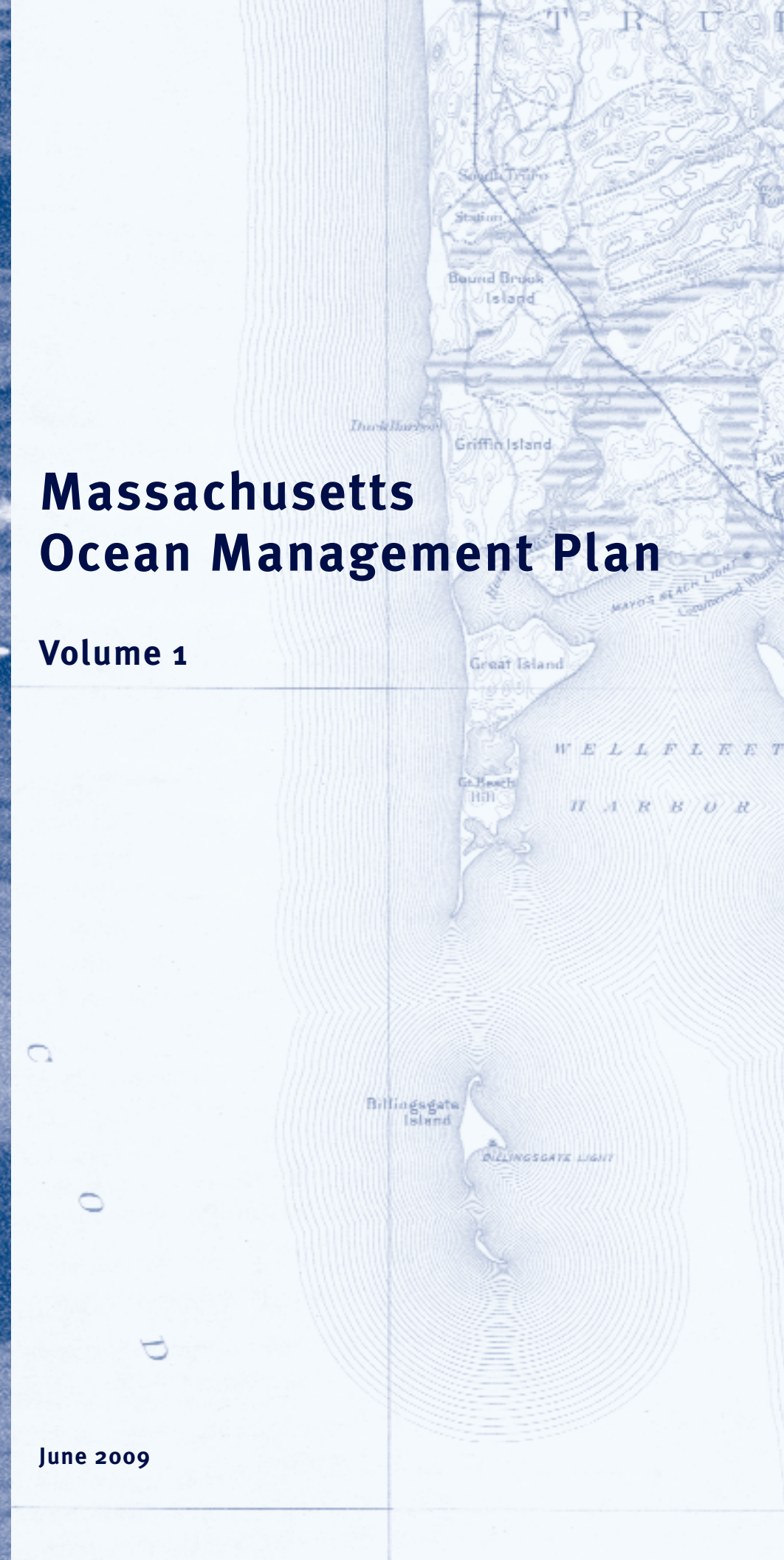


DRAFT

Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan

Volume 1

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June 30, 2009

On May 28, 2008, Governor Deval Patrick signed the Massachusetts Oceans Act of 2008, which directed the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to develop a comprehensive management plan to serve as the basis for the protection and sustainable use of our ocean and coastal waters. The Commonwealth is blazing a trail under the Oceans Act – we are the first state to undertake such a comprehensive plan and our actions place Massachusetts at the forefront as other states and the federal government move to undertake similar planning in the future.

I am pleased herewith to present the Draft Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan for public review. The draft plan is the product of an extraordinary process – 18 public meetings, 90 stakeholder consultations, and countless hours on the part of private citizens and state officials alike as they brought their expertise to bear on one of our most awesome responsibilities, the management and stewardship of the Commonwealth’s ocean waters. I would like to thank the members of the Ocean Advisory Commission and the Science Advisory Council as well as the staff of my agencies, led by Assistant Secretary Deerin Babb-Brott, for all of their work and contributions to this draft. Now this process turns to the public once again, as the draft plan undergoes another six months of scrutiny and revision before final adoption.

The year-long process of consultation and analysis that led to the draft plan has revealed, once again, just what a precious resource we have in our state waters. The three-mile-wide strip of ocean that lines our coast is a busy place, teeming with fishing boats, shipping vessels, and pleasure craft, and it is a natural wonder, providing habitat for a wide variety of species. This mix of uses is nothing new to the Bay State and our deep ties to maritime industry and recreation are part of the fabric of our nation’s history. What is evident nonetheless from the draft plan is the magnitude of the challenge before us to balance resource protection and human uses, both traditional and emerging, in a proactive fashion as required by the Oceans Act. In my judgment, the draft plan meets that challenge.

The draft plan represents the state of the art in ocean planning. It applies the best available science and the firsthand knowledge of stakeholders and creates a new template for reviewing projects proposed for state waters. The draft plan establishes special, sensitive, and unique categories for management policies in areas representing more than 60% of Commonwealth waters. The plan also combines spatial designations for certain functions – notably the highly protected Prohibited Area off the Cape Cod National Seashore as well as the designation of two areas for wind energy development – and a performance-based management approach intended to balance competing interests in the rest of the state’s waters. Two percent of state waters are designated for the commercial-scale renewable energy development that is vital to the Commonwealth’s greenhouse gas and environmental goals. Taken together, the draft plan presents a new standard of protection and sustainable use of the public trust resources of our oceans.

I want to thank the members of the public and stakeholder groups who gave of their time and their expertise over the past year to make the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan an example for the nation and the world. I congratulate them on their contributions, and hope they all take as much pride in the product as I do.

But our work together is not done. Now that the draft plan is complete, I look forward to continued comment and collaboration as we work toward promulgating the final Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan by December 31, 2009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian A. Bowles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "I" and "A".

Ian A. Bowles
Secretary
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Environmental Affairs

Acknowledgments

The draft Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan has been prepared for public review through the committed effort of many people. The Executive Office for Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) would like to thank everyone who contributed their time, energy, and expertise to this ground-breaking effort, which is the foundation for a new, comprehensive approach to ocean management in Massachusetts.

First, EEA would like to acknowledge the support, guidance, and expert advice provided by both the Ocean Advisory Commission and the Science Advisory Council, whose members fully embraced their charges to assist EEA in developing the plan. EEA would also like to recognize the six technical work groups, made up of state agency staff and members from federal agencies, academia, the renewable energy industry, and non-governmental organizations, which assembled available natural resource and human use data for plan development.

This integrated approach to ocean planning brought together numerous government agencies at the state and federal level. On the state level, this included the Department of Agricultural Resources; Department of Conservation and Recreation; Department of Energy Resources; Department of Environmental Protection; Department of Fish and Game's Division of Marine Fisheries and Division of Fisheries and Wildlife; Massachusetts Historical Commission; Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; and EEA's Office of Coastal Zone Management. In particular, we would like to recognize the members of the Interagency Planning and Regulatory Teams—a core group at the state agency level who provided input and feedback during the ocean planning process—as well as the Ocean Sanctuary Act technical advisory committee who are reviewing the regulatory definitions of “public necessity and convenience” and “significant alteration,” as required by the Oceans Act. EEA would like to especially thank Commissioner Mary B. Griffin of the Department of Fish and Game and Commissioner Laurie Burt of the Department of Environmental Protection for the substantial staff time and resources their agencies contributed to plan development. In addition, we would like to recognize the Division of Marine Fisheries and Director Paul Diodati for the extensive data, analysis, and consultation they contributed to the ocean planning process.

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The following is a complete listing of the many formal groups who contributed to the development of the draft Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan.

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Data Contributors - The following organizations contributed data to the planning effort:

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