

THE OCEAN NEEDS PERMANENT PROTECTION FROM POLLUTION & HARMFUL INDUSTRIALIZATION

Join the Cause for the “COZ”!

In the 1980s, the New York/New Jersey Bight was the “Ocean Dumping Capital of the World.” A total of eight ocean dumpsites were scattered over 15,000 square miles of contaminated ocean waters. The NY/NJ Bight is defined as the waters from Montauk Point, NY, to Cape May, NJ, offshore to the outer edge of the Continental Shelf (to depths of 6,000 feet). After years of unmonitored pollution, beachgoers regularly experienced beaches enveloped in litter, fish consumption advisories due to contaminated sediment in waterways, and beach closures from runoff, storm drains, and raw sewage discharge.



Over the last 40 years, Clean Ocean Action has led campaigns to end ocean dumping, reduce pollution, and block numerous proposals for oil and gas drilling. These developments have played a major role in restoring the ocean, protecting its inhabitants, and improving the condition of the shore. The NY/NJ Bight is an essential economic, ecologic, and aesthetic resource of the United States. However, it is currently threatened by climate change, fossil fuel companies, pollution, and harmful industrialization. The ocean must be protected.

The diversity of life in the NY/NJ Bight is more unique and expansive than many know. Over 300 species of fish, nearly 350 species of birds, 5 species of sea turtles, and many marine mammals (including 33 species of whales and dolphins, 1 species of porpoise, and 4 species of seals) frequent this region. In addition, habitat in the NY/NJ Bight serves as an essential migratory pathway for species. Plus, the ocean is our primary buffer against climate change. We cannot save the planet without a healthy ocean.

NOW, MORE THAN EVER, A COMPREHENSIVE LAW IS NEEDED TO PROTECT THE OCEAN:

Unfortunately, laws and regulations are woefully inadequate to protect the vast ecological and economic value of this ocean region — including its living marine resources — from pollution and industrial activities. Battles to protect the ocean are time-consuming, unproductive, and exhausting since they are fought on a permit-by-permit basis. Decades of meaningful work have led to tremendous improvements in water quality. It is time to lock-in this progress and lock-out activities that harm the environment and marine resources. These changes would guarantee that our ocean will be protected for generations to come.

After several decades of defending the ocean, Clean Ocean Action (COA) developed a holistic approach to its initiative to protect the NY/NJ Bight by creating a zone where pollution and industrialization are prohibited. In 2011, COA led a campaign for legislation dubbed the Clean Ocean Zone (“COZ”) that would support environmentally-friendly usage of marine resources (e.g., fishing, boating, responsible renewable energies) while securing enduring protections from harmful industrialization. However, the bill never passed. Today, industrial proposals and new technologies have accelerated at a scale unimaginable just a decade ago.

The Clean Ocean Zone, NOW!

Given these threats, COA has renewed and revised the COZ initiative. COA seeks your support to demand the Clean Ocean Zone and lock-in permanent protections. The COZ aims to:

REDUCE POLLUTION:

1. Prohibit new ocean dumpsites where waste material, or dumping of chemicals is disposed or discharged by vessels into or within the ocean.
2. Mandate capping the Historic Area Remediation Site (HARS) -- formerly the Mud Dump Site -- with progressively cleaner sediment to ensure its remediation and cleanup and to protect against adverse ecological effects.
3. Prohibit new point sources of pollution (under the federal Clean Water Act definition) and increases of discharge capacity (e.g., wastewater discharge outfalls, industrial discharges) or by industrial injection.

PROTECT MARINE ECOSYSTEMS:

4. Protect valuable sand and gravel resources by prohibiting industrial strip-mining, while allowing beach replenishment activities, and prohibit mining of other mineral resources.
5. Prohibit industrial and non-renewable energy facilities and infrastructure, including oil and gas exploration, development, and production, and liquefied natural gas import/export facilities.
6. Allow renewable energy development based on the precautionary principle and only if it is reasonable, responsible, and sustainable, and responsible regulations and pilot studies are established to determine limitations with comprehensive monitoring and enforcement for siting, construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning. These specifications must be based on an independent, scientifically, and comparatively valid pilot scale project to ensure that that any leases, easements, rights-of-way, or permits issued to establish a renewable energy facility do not endanger human health and safety or the marine environment as measured by sustaining the current rich biodiversity and populations of marine life, individually or cumulatively, including endangered species and sensitive species at sensitive life stages.

SUPPORT MARINE RESOURCES & USES:

7. Support recreational and commercial fishing by acknowledging that federal and state laws for fisheries exist. Prohibit the COZ legislation from being used to adopt or enact fisheries management actions for recreational or commercial fishing.
8. Support approved federal and state artificial reefs, and support underwater scientific and historic research and exploration that does not adversely affect the ecosystem.
9. Support, celebrate, and sustain maritime activities that depend on a healthy and clean ocean, such as boating, underwater diving, fishing, surfing, swimming, and the enjoyment of the sea. The COZ legislation will not be used to restrict or limit these activities.

SUPPORT THE CLEAN OCEAN ZONE! GO TO CLEANOCEANACTION.ORG FOR COZ UPDATES AND ACTION ALERTS