

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

July 14, 2016

Dear President Obama:

As Members of Congress who represent the Northeastern United States, we write in support of the Administration's efforts to advance the ocean planning process, including the release of a draft Northeast Ocean Plan. Since 2012, the Northeast Regional Planning Body has worked with our states, engaging our constituents on their needs for effective ocean management to support a sustainable and vibrant Northeast environment and economy. The recently released draft Northeast Ocean Plan is the nation's first ocean plan for federal waters, and we are proud of the historic and continued leadership role our states and region have played in its development.

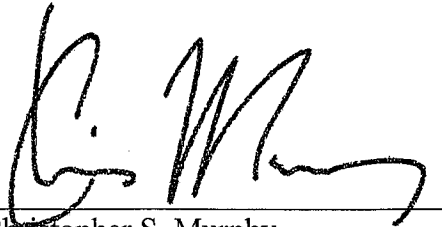
The plan has many elements that will benefit states, federal agencies, tribes, and other ocean users in the Northeast. Elements of the Northeast Ocean Plan we find particularly important include:

- 1) New information developed in partnership with numerous ocean industries. This data identifies regional ocean uses, commercial needs, and future industry trends for the region.
- 2) Collaboration among states, tribes, and federal agencies that will streamline permitting and decision-making by facilitating early identification of potential conflicts.
- 3) Access to marine life and habitat data that provide transparent, management-driven information for decision-makers, enhancing our ability to conserve sensitive ocean resources.

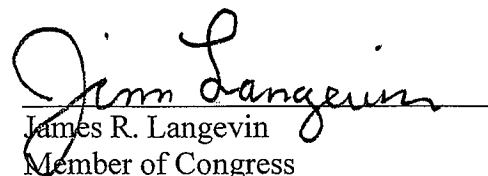
In Congress, we have fully supported our states and constituents as they took the initiative and engaged in the regional ocean planning process. Further, both public and private stakeholders entered into this planning process based on the assurance of full and ongoing support from federal agencies. We respectfully request that the Administration continue its engagement as the public provides additional input during the draft comment period. We urge the Administration to ensure the regional planning board continues its public outreach and incorporates that public input into the final plan. Through refining and perfecting the plan and its data portal, federal agencies, states and local stakeholders can better capitalize on the Atlantic as an economic driver and work to protect its environmental treasures for generations to come.

The Atlantic Ocean is an inextricable part of our region's economy and way of life. We are proud of the accomplishments of our region and of the continued engagement of our constituents throughout this process. The consortium of stakeholders has given us a blueprint for action that reflects the dynamic ocean ecosystem and various maritime uses inherent to the Northeast. As we celebrate this milestone, we look forward to working with you throughout the comment period to perfect and finalize the plan.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Kelly A. Ayotte

Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Angus King, Jr.

Angus King, Jr.
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Jack Reed

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Michael E. Capuano

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark

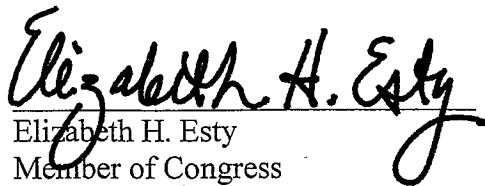
Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

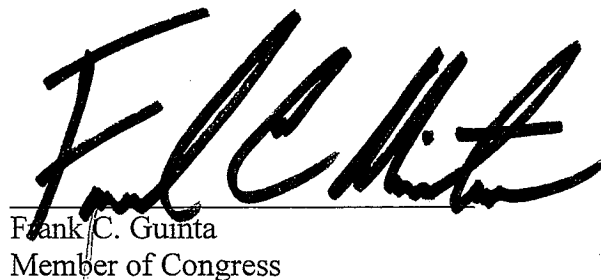
Joe Courtney

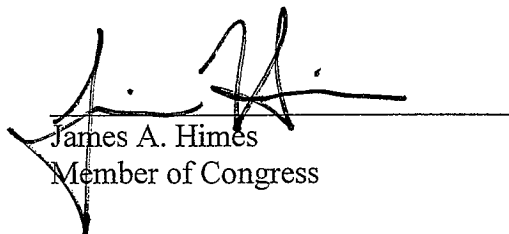
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro

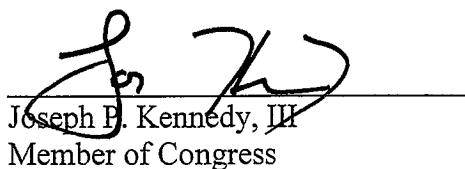
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress


Elizabeth H. Esty
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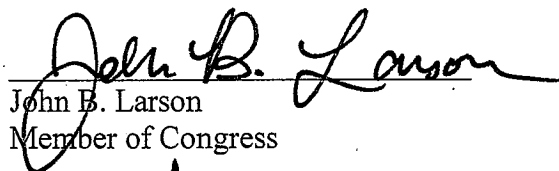

Frank C. Guinta
Member of Congress

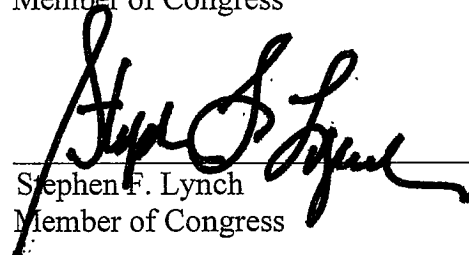

James A. Himes
Member of Congress

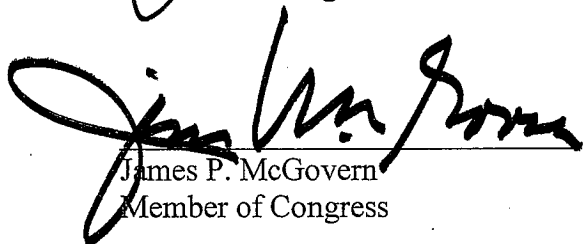

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

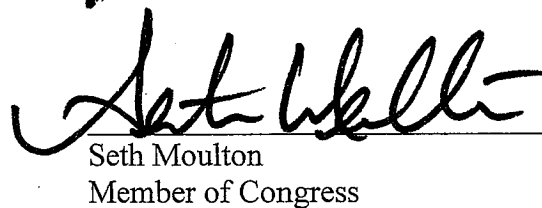

Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress


Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

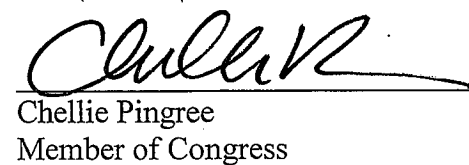

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

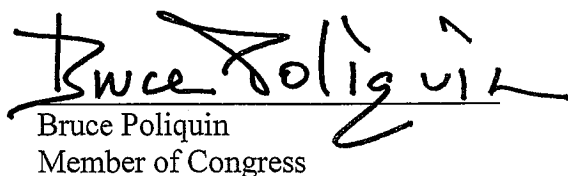

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

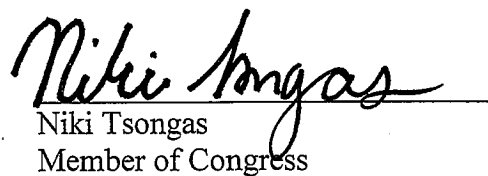

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Seth Moulton
Member of Congress


Richard E. Neal
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Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Bruce Poliquin
Member of Congress


Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress