

Contact: Joel Barkin
Department of State
(212) 417-5800

Yancey Roy
Department of Environmental Conservation
(518) 402-8000

Final Report Detailing How Best to Protect New York's Ocean and Great Lake Ecosystems Delivered to Governor and Legislature

ALBANY - April 8, 2009 – Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis and Secretary of State Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez, on behalf of the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council, today delivered a report, "Our Waters, Our Communities, Our Future" to Governor David A. Paterson and the members of the State Legislature.

The Council's nine-member State agencies collaborated to detail opportunities to protect and enhance New York's shoreline waters through an "ecosystem-based management" approach to decision-making within their respective missions. This is a clear break with traditional, often segmented resource management methods; shifting to recognize the interconnections among ecosystems and the need to manage human activities to ensure ecosystems deliver what humans need.

Commissioner Grannis said: "Healthy coastal ecosystems are an essential ingredient in New York's future – for our environment, our economy and our quality of life. This report makes clear that, to protect our natural resources, we must switch from our traditional management methods to an integrated approach. We must begin to chart a new course for managing our coastal ecosystems."

Secretary of State Cortes-Vazquez said, "This report puts forward a clear blueprint for what the state must do to better protect some of our most cherished resources. Public participation in the development of this report was tremendous. New Yorkers from all across the state expressed their support of the goals of this report, and their desire to see new commitment towards creating a health coastal ecosystem."

The draft report underwent a rigorous stakeholder and public review. Fourteen "community conversations" were held across the State from Fredonia to Montauk, providing an opportunity for engaging the public and a multitude of stakeholders in the final drafting of the report. The more than 500 New Yorkers that attended served as sounding board for the Council's findings

and recommendations. The participants called for action, endorsed the recommendations and asked to be part of the process as the report moves into implementation.

In addition to having the Council continue to serve as the coordinating body for statewide EBM efforts, the report calls for: accommodating competing offshore uses, including renewable energy and habitat protection; establishing regional EBM action plans; working with local governments to advance EBM; continuing EBM integration into existing government programs; developing a health index to monitor ecosystem vitality; continuing key data and research efforts; broadening stakeholder engagement; refining a coastal ecosystems research agenda; completing projects in the existing demonstration areas; addressing the sources of marine debris; considering additional vessel no-discharge zones; and, enhancing the ocean and coastal resources atlas.

The New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council members include: Commissioner Pete Grannis, Chair of the Council, Secretary of State Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, the Commissioners of Agriculture and Markets, Patrick Hooker; General Services, John Egan; Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Carol Ash; Transportation, Astrid Glynn; Economic Development, Marisa Lago; President of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, Francis J. Murray; and Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Chancellor of the State University of New York, John J. O'Connor.

To obtain an electronic version of the Council's report, please visit www.nyoglecc.org