



# Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition

September 24, 2009

Honorable Governor Charlie Crist  
Office of Governor Charlie Crist  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Governor Crist,


The Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition recognizes a great need for the development and implementation of an Ocean and Coastal Management Plan in the state of Florida. Our coastal and ocean resources are experiencing a silent collapse as a result of pollution, destruction of productive marine habitat, increased strain on fish populations and global warming-induced impacts, such as higher water temperatures, shifts in currents and acidification.<sup>i</sup> Our oceans already host shipping, fishing, defense, and many types of recreational activities. Increased ocean activities and development, if not carried out wisely, will cause “ocean sprawl,” further stressing our valuable ocean resources and jeopardizing the food, jobs and recreation our oceans provide to this state.

We must engage in a process of marine spatial planning to avoid a haphazard approach to ocean resource management. Otherwise, we will continue with a first come first serve mentality that results in a “tragedy of the Commons”, where no one is accountable for the destruction of our quality of life and natural environment, but we all are responsible. The result is the loss of the resources by all, and further erosion of the public’s trust in government. We can and should do better for ourselves and for future generations.

A number of countries and U.S. states are already well on their way to implementing ocean and coastal planning efforts. Often, these efforts have been triggered by proposed energy development plans, whether offshore oil and gas or offshore wind projects, or a combination of the two. For example, the ocean planning/zoning scheme for the Great Barrier Reef in Australia was initially begun because of a proposal to drill for oil in the area (this was 30 years ago); the marine spatial planning being done by countries bordering the North Sea (including Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, UK) has been triggered because of proposed offshore wind farms and an EU mandate to establish protected areas—both of which need to take into account location of fishing grounds, offshore oil facilities, shipping lanes and other uses. Here in the US, ocean planning efforts in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Oregon were stimulated by the proposed siting of offshore wind farms and wave energy facilities. A good example of spatial planning here in Florida is the ocean zoning system set up in the Florida Keys under the Florida Keys

Caribbean Conservation Corporation • Environmental Defense • Gulf Restoration Network •  
Natural Resources Defense Council • Ocean Conservancy • Reef Relief • Surfrider Foundation • 1000  
Friends of Florida

1110 N. Florida Avenue  
Tampa, FL 33602  
813.846.1827  
info@flcoastalandocean.org





# Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition

National Marine Sanctuary Program. Originally viewed skeptically by some, this approach is now embraced by the tourism industry, business community and citizens alike.

Both of the national ocean commissions – the congressionally-established U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the independent Pew Oceans Commission – support ocean management plans as a fundamental tool for ocean protection, restoration and sustainable use. The Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition believes the time is now for Florida to develop and implement such a tool.

The Coalition is glad to see Senator LeMieux’s opposition to recent federal proposals for drilling off Florida and his recent appointment to the Commerce Committee, which has significant authority over marine fisheries, NOAA and NASA. We look forward to the opportunity to work with Florida leaders such as yourself and many others to create and implement an ocean management plan which will protect our treasured natural resources and Florida’s economy.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Pickel, Coordinator Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition  
Sarah Chasis, Natural Resources Defense Council  
Ericka D’Avanzo, Surfrider Foundation  
Joe Murphy, Gulf Restoration Network  
Paul Johnson, Reef Relief  
Gary Appelson, Caribbean Conservation Corporation  
Michelle Owen, Environmental Defense Fund  
Dan Pennington, 1000 Friends of Florida

---

<sup>i</sup> Jackson, Jeremy B., [Ecological extinction and evolution in the brave new ocean](http://www.pnas.org/content/105/suppl.1/11458.full.pdf+html), Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, August 11, 2008, <http://www.pnas.org/content/105/suppl.1/11458.full.pdf+html>

Caribbean Conservation Corporation • Environmental Defense • Gulf Restoration Network •  
Natural Resources Defense Council • Ocean Conservancy • Reef Relief • Surfrider Foundation • 1000  
Friends of Florida

1110 N. Florida Avenue  
Tampa, FL 33602  
813.846.1827  
[info@flcoastalandocean.org](mailto:info@flcoastalandocean.org)

